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MISCELLANIES

OF

LITERATURE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

Isaac Disraeli

"CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE."

A NEW EDITION REVISED AND CORRECTED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LITERARY MISCELLANIES. CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS.

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CONTENTS.

LITERARY MISCELLANIES.

	Page
Miscellanists	3
Prefaces	9
Style	14
Goldsmith and Johnson	17
Self-Characters	19
On Reading	22
On Habituating ourselves to an Individual Pursuit	26
On Novelty in Literature	29
Vers De Société	32
The Genius of Molière	35
The Sensibility of Racine	52
Of Sterne	58
Hume, Robertson, and Birch,	67
Of Voluminous Works incomplete by the deaths of the Authors	78
Of Domestic Novelties at first condemned	83
Domesticity; or, A Dissertation on Servants	92
Printed Letters in the Vernacular Idiom	102

CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS.

Preface	111
Authors by Profession—Guthrie and Amhurst,—Drake—Smollett	113
The Case of Authors Stated, including the History of Literary Property	132
The Sufferings of Authors	129

A Mendicant Author, and the Patrons of Former Times . . 133
Cowley—of his Melancholy 143
The Pains of Fastidious Egotism 150
Influence of a Bad Temper in Criticism 160
Disappointed Genius takes a fatal direction by its Abuse, . . 168
The Maladies of Authors 180
Literary Scotchmen 186
Laborious Authors 195
The Despair of Young Poets 210
The Miseries of the first English Commentator 216
The Life of an Authoress 218
Indiscretion of a Historian—Carte 222
Literary Ridicule, illustrated by some Account of a Literary Satire 227
Literary Hatred, exhibiting a Conspiracy against an Author . . 244
Undue Severity of Criticism 253
A Voluminous Author without Judgment 261
Genius and Erudition, the Victims of Immoderate Vanity . . 271
Genius, the Dupe of its Passions 284
Literary Disappointments Disordering the Intellect . . . 289
Rewards of Oriental Students 305
Danger incurred by giving the Result of Literary Inquiries . . 312
A National Work which could find no Patronage 320
Miseries of Successful Authors 322
The Illusions of Writers in Verse 333
Index 348

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PREFACE.

These volumes comprise my writings on subjects chiefly of our vernacular literature. Now, collected together, they offer a unity of design, and afford to the general reader and to the student of classical antiquity some initiation into our national Literature. It is presumed also, that they present materials for thinking not solely on literary topics; authors and books are not alone here treated of;—a comprehensive view of human nature necessarily enters into the subject from the diversity of the characters portrayed, through the gradations of their faculties, the influence of their tastes, and those incidents of their lives prompted by their fortunes or their passions. The present volumes, with their brother "Curiosities of Literature" now constitute a body of reading which may awaken knowledge in minds only seeking amusement, and refresh the deeper studies of the learned by matters not unworthy of their curiosity.

The Miscellanies are literary amenities, should they be found to deserve the title, constructed on that principle early adopted by me, of interspersing facts with speculation.

The titless of CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS and QUARRELS OF AUTHORS do not wholly designate the works, which include a considerable portion of literary history.

THE INQUIRY INTO THE LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTER OF JAMES THE FIRST has surely corrected some general misconceptions, and thrown light on some obscure points in the history of that anomalous personage. It is a satisfaction to me to observe, since the publication of this tract, that while some competent judges have considered the "evidence irresistible," a material change has occurred in the tone of most writers. The subject presented an occasion to exhibit a minute picture of that age of transition in our national history.

The LITERARY CHARACTER has been an old favourite with many of my contemporaries departed or now living, who have found it respond to their own emotions.

Public favour has encouraged the republication of these various works, which often referred to have long been difficult to procure. It has been deferred from time to time with the intention of giving the subjects a more enlarged investigation; but I have delayed the task till it cannot be performed. One of the Calamities of Authors falls to my lot, the delicate organ of vision with me has suffered a singular disorder,*—a disorder which no oculist by his

* I record my literary calamity as a warning to my sedentary brothers. When my eyes dwell on any object, or whenever they are closed, there appear on a bluish film, a number of mathematical squares, which are the reflection of the fine net-work of the retina, succeeded by blotches which subside into printed characters, apparently forming distinct words, arranged in straight lines as in a printed book; the monosyllables are often legible. This is the process of a few seconds. It is remarkable that the usual power of the eye is not injured or diminished for distant objects, while those near are clouded over.

touch can heal, and no physician by his experience can expound; so much remains concerning the frame of man unrevealed to man!

In the midst of my library I am as it were distant from it. My unfinished labours, frustrated designs, remain paralyzed. In a joyous heat I wander no longer through the wide circuit before me. The "strucken deer" has the sad privilege to weep when he lies down, perhaps no more to course amid those far-distant woods where once he sought to range.

Although thus compelled to refrain in a great measure from all mental labour, and incapacitated from the use of the pen and the book, these works notwithstanding have received many important corrections, having been read over to me with critical precision.

Amid this partial darkness I am not left without a distant hope, nor a present consolation; and to HER who has so often lent to me the light of her eyes, the intelligence of her voice, and the careful work of her hand, the author must ever owe "the debt immense" of paternal gratitude.

London, May, 1840.

LITERARY MISCELLANIES.

LITERARY MISCELLANIES.

MISCELLANISTS.

Miscellanists are the most popular writers among every people; for it is they who form a communication between the learned and the unlearned, and, as it were, throw a bridge between those two great divisions of the public. Literary Miscellanists are classed among philological studies. The studies of philology formerly consisted rather of the labours of arid grammarians and conjectural critics, than of that more elegant philosophy which has, within our own time, been introduced into literature, and which by its graces and investigation, augment the beauties of original genius. This delightful province has been termed in Germany the *Æsthetic*, from a Greek term signifying sentiment of feeling. Æsthetic critics fathom the depths, or run with the current of an author's thoughts, and the sympathies of such a critic offer a supplement to the genius of the original writer. Longinus and Addison are Æsthetic critics. The critics of the adverse school always look for a precedent, and if none is found, wo to the originality of a great writer!

Very elaborate criticisms have been formed by eminent writers, in which great learning and acute logic have only betrayed the absence of the Æsthetic faculty. Warburton called Addison an empty superficial writer, destitute himself of an atom of Addison's taste for the beautiful; and Johnson is a flagrant instance that great powers of reasoning are more fatal to the works of imagination than had ever been suspected.

By one of these learned critics was Montaigne, the venerable father of modern Miscellanies, called "a bold ignorant fellow." To thinking readers, this critical summary will appear mysterious; for Montaigne had imbibed the spirit of all the moral writers of antiquity; and although he has made a capricious complaint of a defective memory, we cannot but wish the complaint had been more real; for we discover in his works such a gathering of knowledge that it seems at times to stifle his own energies. Montaigne was censured by Scaliger, as Addison was censured by Warburton; because both, like Socrates, smiled at that mere erudition which consists of knowing the thoughts of others and having no thoughts of our own. To weigh syllables, and to arrange dates, to adjust texts, and to heap annotations, has generally proved the absence of the higher faculties. When a more adventurous spirit, of this herd, attempts some novel discovery, often men of taste behold, with indignation, the perversions of their understanding; and a Bentley in his Milton, or a Warburton on a Virgil, had either a singular imbecility concealed under the arrogance of the scholar, or they did not believe what they told the public; the one in his extraordinary invention of an interpolating editor, and the other in his more extraordinary explanation of the Eleusinian mysteries. But what was still worse, the froth of the head became venom, when it reached the heart.

Montaigne has also been censured for an apparent vanity, in making himself the idol of his lucubrations. If he had not done this, he had not performed the promise he makes at the commencement of his preface. An engaging tenderness prevails in these *naïve* expressions which shall not be injured by a version. "Je l'ay voué à la commodité particulière de mes parens et amis; à ce que m'ayans perdu (ce qu'ils ont à faire bientost) ils y puissent retrouver quelques traicts de mes humeurs, et que par ce moyen ils nourrissent plus entière et plus vifue la conoissance qu'ils ont eu de moi."

Those authors who appear sometimes to forget they are writers, and remember they are men, will be our favourites. He who writes from the heart, will write to the heart; every one is enabled to decide on his merits, and they will not be

referred to learned heads, or a distant day. "Why," says Boileau, "are my verses read by all? it is only because they speak truths, and that I am convinced of the truths I write."

Why have some of our fine writers interested more than others, who have not displayed inferior talents? Why is Addison still the first of our essayists? he has sometimes been excelled in criticisms more philosophical, in topics more interesting, and in diction more coloured. But there is a personal charm in the character he has assumed in his periodical Miscellanies, which is felt with such a gentle force, that we scarce advert to it. He has painted forth his little humours, his individual feelings, and eternised himself to his readers. Johnson and Hawkesworth we receive with respect, and we dismiss with awe; we come from their writings as from public lectures, and from Addison's as from private conversations. Montaigne preferred those of the ancients, who appear to write under a conviction of what they said; the eloquent Cicero declaims but coldly on liberty, while in the impetuous Brutus may be perceived a man who is resolved to purchase it with his life. We know little of Plutarch; yet a spirit of honesty and persuasion in his works expresses a philosophical character capable of imitating, as well as admiring, the virtues he records.

Sterne perhaps derives a portion of his celebrity from the same influence; he interests us in his minutest motions, for he tells us all he feels. Richardson was sensible of the power with which these minute strokes of description enter the heart, and which are so many fastenings to which the imagination clings. He says, "If I give speeches and conversations, I ought to give them justly; for the humours and characters of persons cannot be known, unless I repeat *what* they say, and their *manner* of saying." I confess I am infinitely pleased when Sir William Temple acquaints us with the size of his orange-trees, and with the flavour of his peaches and grapes, confessed by Frenchmen to equal those of France; with his having had the honour to naturalise in this country four kinds of grapes, with his liberal distribution of them because "he ever thought all things of this kind the

commoner they are the better." In a word with his passionate attachment to his garden, where he desired his heart to be buried, of his desire to escape from great employments, and having passed five years without going to town, where, by the way, "he had a large house always ready to receive him." Dryden has interspersed many of these little particulars in his prosaic compositions, and I think that his character and dispositions may be more correctly acquired by uniting these scattered notices, than by any biographical account which can now be given of this man of genius.

From this agreeable mode of writing, a species of compositions may be discriminated, which seems above all others to identify the reader with the writer; compositions which are often discovered in a fugitive state, but to which their authors were prompted by the fine impulses of genius, derived from the peculiarity of their situation. Dictated by the heart, or polished with the fondness of delight, these productions are impressed by the seductive eloquence of genius, or attach us by the sensibility of taste. The object thus selected is no task imposed on the mind of the writer, for the mere ambition of literature; but is a voluntary effusion, warm with all the sensations of a pathetic writer. In a word, they are the compositions of genius, on a subject in which it is most deeply interested; which it revolves on all its sides, which it paints in all its tints, and which it finishes with the same ardour it began. Among such works may be placed the exiled Bolingbroke's "Reflections upon Exile;" the retired Petrarch and Zimmerman's Essays on "Solitude;" the imprisoned Boethius's "Consolations of Philosophy;" the oppressed Pierius Valerianus's Catalogue of "Literary Calamities;" the deformed Hay's Essay on "Deformity;" the projecting De Foe's "Essays on Projects;" the liberal Shenstone's poem on "Economy."

We may respect the profound genius of voluminous writers; they are a kind of painters who occupy great room, and fill up, as a satirist expresses it, "an acre of canvas." But we love to dwell on those more delicate pieces,—a group of Cupids; a Venus emerging from the waves; a Psyche or an Aglaia, which embellish the cabinet of the man of taste.

It should, indeed, be the characteristic of good Miscellanies, to be multifarious and concise. Usbek, the Persian of Montesquieu, is one of the profoundest philosophers, his letters are however but concise pages. Rochefoucault and La Bruyère are not superficial observers of human nature, although they have only written sentences. Of Tacitus it has been finely remarked by Montesquieu that "he abridged every thing because he saw every thing." Montaigne approves of Plutarch and Seneca, because their loose papers were suited to his dispositions, and where knowledge is acquired without a tedious study. "It is," says he, "no great attempt to take one in hand, and I give over at pleasure, for they have no sequel or connexion." La Fontaine agreeably applauds short compositions:

> "Les longs ouvrages me font peur;
> Loin d'épuiser une matière,
> On n'en doit prendre que la fleur;"

and old Francis Osborne has a coarse and ludicrous image in favour of such opuscula; he says, "Huge volumes, like the ox roasted whole at Bartholomew fair, may proclaim plenty of labour and invention, but afford less of what is delicate, savory, and well concocted, than *smaller pieces*." To quote so light a genius as the enchanting La Fontaine, and so solid a mind as the sensible Osborne, is taking in all the climates of the human mind; it is touching at the equator, and pushing on to the pole.

Montaigne's works have been called by a cardinal "The Breviary of Idlers." It is therefore the book of man; for all men are idlers; we have hours which we pass with lamentation, and which we know are always returning. At those moments miscellanists are comfortable to all our humours. We dart along their airy and concise page; and their lively anecdote, or their profound observation, are so many interstitial pleasures in our listless hours.

The ancients were great admirers of miscellanies; Aulus Gellius has preserved a copious list of titles of such works. These titles are so numerous, and include such gay and pleasing descriptions, that we may infer by their number that they were greatly admired by the public, and by their titles

that they prove the great delight their authors experienced in their composition. Among the titles are "a basket of flowers;" "an embroidered mantle;" and "a variegated meadow." Such a miscellanist as was the admirable Erasmus, deserves the happy description which Plutarch with an elegant enthusiasm bestows on Menander: he calls him the delight of philosophers fatigued with study; that they have recourse to his works as to a meadow enamelled with flowers, where the sense is delighted by a purer air; and very elegantly adds, that Menander has a salt peculiar to himself, drawn from the same waters that gave birth to Venus.

The Troubadours, Conteurs, and Jongleurs, practised what is yet called in the southern parts of France, *Le guay Saber*, or the gay science. I consider these as the miscellanists of their day; they had their grave moralities, their tragical histories, and their sportive tales; their verse and their prose. The village was in motion at their approach; the castle was opened to the ambulatory poets, and the feudal hypochondriac listened to their solemn instruction and their airy fancy. I would call miscellaneous composition Le guay Saber, and I would have every miscellaneous writer as solemn and as gay, as various and as pleasing, as these lively artists of versatility.

Nature herself is most delightful in her miscellaneous scenes. When I hold a volume of miscellanies, and run over with avidity the titles of its contents, my mind is enchanted, as if it were placed among the landscapes of Valais, which Rousseau has described with such picturesque beauty. I fancy myself seated in a cottage amid those mountains, those valleys, those rocks, encircled by the enchantments of optical illusion. I look, and behold at once the united seasons—"All climates in one place, all seasons in one instant." I gaze at once on a hundred rainbows, and trace the romantic figures of the shifting clouds. I seem to be in a temple dedicated to the service of the Goddess Variety.

PREFACES.

I DECLARE myself infinitely delighted by a preface. Is it exquisitely written? no literary morsel is more delicious. Is the author inveterately dull? it is a kind of preparatory information, which may be very useful. It argues a deficiency in taste to turn over an elaborate preface unread; for it is the attar of the author's roses; every drop distilled at an immense cost. It is the reason of the reasoning, and the folly of the foolish.

I do not wish, however, to conceal, that several writers, as well as readers, have spoken very disrespectfully of this species of literature. That fine writer Montesquieu, in closing the preface to his "Persian Letters," says, "I do not praise my 'Persians;' because it would be a very tedious thing, put in a place already very tedious of itself; I mean a preface." Spence in the preface to his "Polymetis," informs us, that "there is not any sort of writing which he sits down to with so much unwillingness as that of prefaces; and as he believes most people are not much fonder of reading them than he is of writing them, he shall get over this as fast as he can." Pelisson warmly protested against prefatory composition; but when he published the works of Sarrasin, was wise enough to compose a very pleasing one. He, indeed, endeavoured to justify himself for acting against his own opinions, by this ingenious excuse, that, like funeral honours, it is proper to show the utmost regard for them when given to others, but to be inattentive to them for ourselves.

Notwithstanding all this evidence, I have some good reasons for admiring prefaces; and barren as the investigation may appear, some literary amusement can be gathered.

In the first place I observe, that a prefacer is generally a most accomplished liar. Is an author to be introduced to the public? the preface is as genuine a panegyric, and nearly as long a one, as that of Pliny's on the Emperor Trajan. Such a preface is ringing an alarum bell for an author. If we look closer into the characters of these masters of ceremony, who

thus sport with and defy the judgment of their reader, and who, by their extravagant panegyric, do considerable injury to the cause of taste, we discover that some accidental occurrence has occasioned this vehement affection for the author, and which, like that of another kind of love, makes one commit so many extravagances.

Prefaces are indeed rarely sincere. It is justly observed by Shenstone in his prefatory Essay to the Elegies, that, "discourses prefixed to poetry inculcate such tenets as may exhibit the performance to the greatest advantage. The fabric is first raised, and the measures by which we are to judge of it are afterwards adjusted." This observation might be exemplified by more instances than some readers might choose to read. It will be sufficient to observe with what art both Pope and Fontenelle have drawn up their Essays on the nature of Pastoral Poetry, that the rules they wished to establish might be adapted to their own pastorals. Has accident made some ingenious student apply himself to a subordinate branch of literature, or to some science which is not highly esteemed—look in the preface for its sublime panegyric. Collectors of coins, dresses, and butterflies, have astonished the world with eulogiums which would raise their particular studies into the first ranks of philosophy.

It would appear that there is no lie to which a prefacer is not tempted. I pass over the commodious prefaces of Dryden, which were ever adapted to the poem and not to poetry, to the author and not to literature.

The boldest preface-liar was Aldus Manutius, who having printed an edition of Aristophanes, first published in the preface that Saint Chrysostom was accustomed to place this comic poet under his pillow, that he might always have his works at hand. As, in that age, a saint was supposed to possess every human talent, good taste not excepted, Aristophanes thus recommended, became a general favourite. The anecdote lasted for near two centuries; and what was of greater consequence to Aldus, quickened the sale of his Aristophanes. This ingenious invention of the prefacer of Aristophanes at length was detected by Menage.

The insincerity of prefaces arises whenever an author

would disguise his solicitude for his work, by appearing negligent, and even undesirous of its success. A writer will rarely conclude such a preface without betraying himself. I think, that even Dr. Johnson forgot his sound dialectic in the admirable Preface to his Dictionary. In one part he says, "having laboured this work with so much application, I cannot but have some degree of parental fondness." But, in his conclusion, he tells us, "I dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise." I deny the doctor's "frigidity." This polished period exhibits an affected stoicism, which no writer ever felt for the anxious labour of a great portion of life, addressed not merely to a class of readers, but to literary Europe.

But if prefaces are rarely sincere or just, they are, notwithstanding, literary opuscula in which the author is materially concerned. A work with a poor preface, like a person who comes with an indifferent recommendation, must display uncommon merit to master our prejudices, and to please us, as it were, in spite of ourselves. Works ornamented by a finished preface, such as Johnson not unfrequently presented to his friends or his booksellers, inspire us with awe; we observe a veteran guard placed in the porch, and we are induced to conclude from this appearance that some person of eminence resides in the place itself.

The public are treated with contempt, when an author professes to publish his puerilities. This Warburton did in his pompous edition of Shakspeare. In the preface he informed the public, that his notes "were among his *younger amusements*, when he turned over these *sort of writers*." This ungracious compliment to Shakspeare and the public, merited that perfect scourging which our haughty commentator received from the sarcastic Canons of Criticism. Scudery was a writer of some genius, and great variety. His prefaces are remarkable for their gasconades. In his epic poem of Alaric, he says, "I have such a facility in writing verses, and also in my invention, that a poem of double its length would have cost me little trouble. Although it contains only eleven thousand lines, I believe that longer epics do not exhibit more embellishments than mine." And to conclude with one

more student of this class, Amelot de la Houssaie, in the preface to his translation of "the Prince" of Machiavel, instructs us, that "he considers his copy as superior to the original, because it is everywhere intelligible, and Machiavel is frequently obscure." I have seen in the play-bills of strollers, a very pompous description of the triumphant entry of Alexander into Babylon; had they said nothing about the triumph, it might have passed without exciting ridicule; and one might not so maliciously have perceived how ill the four candle-snuffers crawled as elephants, and the triumphal car discovered its want of a lid. But having pre-excited attention, we had full leisure to sharpen our eye. To these imprudent authors and actors we may apply a Spanish proverb, which has the peculiar quaintness of that people, *Aviendo pregonado vino, venden vinagre;* "Having cried up their wine, they sell us vinegar."

A ridiculous humility in a preface is not less despicable. Many idle apologies were formerly in vogue for publication, and formed a literary cant, of which now the meanest writers perceive the futility. A literary anecdote of the Romans has been preserved, which is sufficiently curious. One Albinus, in the preface to his Roman History, intercedes for pardon for his numerous blunders of phraseology; observing that they were the more excusable, as he had composed his history in the Greek language, with which he was not so familiar as his maternal tongue. Cato severely rallies him on this; and justly observes, that our Albinus had merited the pardon he solicits, if a decree of the senate had compelled him thus to have composed it, and he could not have obtained a dispensation. The avowal of our ignorance of the language we employ, is like that excuse which some writers make for composing on topics, in which they are little conversant. A reader's heart is not so easily mollified; and it is a melancholy truth for literary men, that the pleasure of abusing an author is generally superior to that of admiring him. One appears to display more critical acumen than the other, by showing, that though we do not choose to take the trouble of writing, we have infinitely more genius than the author. These suppliant prefacers are described by Boileau.

"Un auteur à genoux dans une humble préface
Au lecteur qu'il ennuie a beau demander grace ;
Il ne gagnera rien sur ce juge irrité,
Qui lui fait son procès de pleine autorité."

Low in a humble preface authors kneel ;
In vain, the wearied reader's heart is steel.
Callous, that irritated judge with awe,
Inflicts the penalties and arms the law.

The most entertaining prefaces in our language are those of Dryden ; and though it is ill-naturedly said, by Swift, that they were merely formed

"To raise the volume's price a shilling,"

yet these were the earliest commencements of English criticism, and the first attempt to restrain the capriciousness of readers, and to form a national taste. Dryden has had the candour to acquaint us with his secret of prefatory composition ; for in that one to his Tales he says, "the nature of preface-writing is rambling; never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learnt from the practice of honest Montaigne." There is no great risk in establishing this observation as an axiom in literature ; for should a prefacer loiter, it is never difficult to get rid of lame persons, by escaping from them ; and the reader may make a preface as concise as he chooses.

It is possible for an author to paint himself in amiable colours, in this useful page, without incurring the contempt of egotism. After a writer has rendered himself conspicuous by his industry or his genius, his admirers are not displeased to hear something relative to him from himself. Hayley, in the preface to his Poems, has conveyed an amiable feature in his personal character, by giving the cause of his devotion to literature, as the only mode by which he could render himself of some utility to his country. There is a modesty in the prefaces of Pope, even when this great poet collected his immortal works ; and in several other writers of the most elevated genius, in a Hume and a Robertson, which becomes their happy successors to imitate, and inferior writers to contemplate with awe.

There is in prefaces a due respect to be shown to the pub-

lic, and to ourselves. He that has no sense of self-dignity, will not inspire any reverence in others; and the ebriety of vanity will be sobered by the alacrity we all feel in disturbing the dreams of self-love. If we dare not attempt the rambling prefaces of a Dryden, we may still entertain the reader, and soothe him into good-humour, for our own interest. This, perhaps, will be best obtained by making the preface (like a symphony to an opera) to contain something analagous to the work itself, to attune the mind into a harmony of tone.*

STYLE.

Every period of literature has its peculiar style, derived from some author of reputation; and the history of a language, as an object of taste, might be traced through a collection of ample quotations, from the most celebrated authors of each period.

To Johnson may be attributed the establishment of our present refinement, and it is with truth he observes of his Rambler, "That he had laboured to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations, and that he has added to the elegance of its construction and to the harmony of its cadence." In this description of his own refinement in style and grammatical accuracy, Johnson probably alluded to the happy carelessness of Addison, whose charm of natural ease long afterwards he discovered. But great inelegance of diction disgraced our language even so late as in 1736, when the "Inquiry into the Life of Homer" was published. That author was certainly desirous of all the graces of composition, and his volume by its singular sculptures evinces his inordinate affection for his work. This fanciful writer had a taste for polished writing, yet he abounds in ex-

* See Curiosities of Literature, p. 25, 11th edition, for an article on Prefaces.

pressions which now would be considered as impure in literary composition. Such vulgarisms are common—the Greeks *fell to their old trade* of one tribe expelling another—the scene is always at Athens, and all the *pother* is some little jilting story—the haughty Roman *snuffed* at the suppleness. If such diction had not been usual with good writers at that period, I should not have quoted Blackwall. Middleton, in his Life of Cicero, though a man of classical taste, and a historian of a classical era, could not preserve himself from colloquial inelegances; the greatest characters are levelled by the poverty of his style. Warburton, and his imitator Hurd, and other living critics of that school, are loaded with familiar idioms, which at present would debase even the style of conversation.

Such was the influence of the elaborate novelty of Johnson, that every writer in every class servilely copied the latinised style, ludicrously mimicking the contortions and re-echoing the sonorous nothings of our great lexicographer; the novelist of domestic life, or the agriculturist in a treatise on turnips, alike aimed at the polysyllabic force, and the cadenced period. Such was the condition of English style for more than twenty years.

Some argue in favour of a natural style, and reiterate the opinion of many great critics that proper ideas will be accompanied by proper words; but though supported by the first authorities, they are not perhaps sufficiently precise in their definition. Writers may think justly, and yet write without any effect; while a splendid style may cover a vacuity of thought. Does not this evident fact prove that style and thinking have not that inseparable connexion which many great writers have pronounced? Milton imagined that beautiful thoughts produce beautiful expressions.—He says,

> "Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers."—

Writing is justly called an art; and Rousseau says, it is not an art easily acquired. Thinking may be the foundation of style; but it is not the superstructure; it is the marble of the edifice, but not its architecture. The art of presenting our

thoughts to another, is often a process of considerable time and labour; and the delicate task of correction, in the development of ideas, is reserved only for writers of fine taste. There are several modes of presenting an idea; vulgar readers are only susceptible of the strong and palpable stroke; but there are many shades of sentiment, which to seize on and to paint, is the pride and the labour of a skilful writer. A beautiful simplicity itself is a species of refinement, and no writer more solicitously corrected his works than Hume, who excels in this mode of composition. The philosopher highly approves of Addison's definition of fine writing, who says, that it consists of sentiments which are natural, without being obvious. This is a definition of thought rather than of composition. Shenstone has hit the truth; for fine writing he defines to be generally the effect of spontaneous thoughts and a laboured style. Addison was not insensible to these charms, and he felt the seductive art of Cicero when he said, that "there is as much difference in apprehending a thought clothed in Cicero's language, and that of a common author, as in seeing an object by the light of a taper, or by the light of the sun."

Mannerists in style, however great their powers, rather excite the admiration than the affection of a man of taste; because their habitual art dissipates that illusion of sincerity, which we love to believe is the impulse which places the pen in the hand of an author. Two eminent literary mannerists are Cicero and Johnson. We know these great men considered their eloquence as a deceptive art; of any subject it had been indifferent to them which side to adopt; and in reading their elaborate works, our ear is more frequently gratified by the ambitious magnificence of their diction, than our heart penetrated by the pathetic enthusiasm of their sentiments. Writers who are not mannerists, but who seize the appropriate tone of their subject, appear to feel a conviction of what they attempt to persuade their reader. It is observable, that it is impossible to imitate with uniform felicity the noble simplicity of a pathetic writer; while the peculiarities of a mannerist are so far from being difficult, that they are displayed with nice exactness by middling writers, who, al-

though their own natural manner had nothing interesting, have attracted notice by such imitations. We may apply to some monotonous mannerists these verses of Boileau:

"Voulez-vous du public mériter les amours ?
Sans cesse en écrivant variez vos discours.
On lit peu ces auteurs nés pour nous ennuier,
Qui toujours sur un ton semblent psalmodier."

Would you the public's envied favours gain ?
Ceaseless, in writing, variegate the strain ;
The heavy author, who the fancy calms,
Seems in one tone to chant his nasal psalms.

Every style is excellent, if it be proper; and that style is most proper which can best convey the intentions of the author to his reader. And after all, it is STYLE alone by which posterity will judge of a great work, for an author can have nothing truly his own but his style; facts, scientific discoveries, and every kind of information, may be seized by all, but an author's diction cannot be taken from him. Hence very learned writers have been neglected, while their learning has not been lost to the world, by having been given by writers with more amenity. It is, therefore, the duty of an author, to learn to write as well as to learn to think; and this art can only be obtained by the habitual study of his sensations, and an intimate acquaintance with the intellectual faculties. These are the true prompters of those felicitous expressions, which gave a tone congruous to the subject; and which invest our thoughts with all the illusion, the beauty, and motion of lively perception.

GOLDSMITH AND JOHNSON.

WE should not censure artists and writers for their attachment to their favourite excellence. Who but an artist can value the ceaseless inquietudes of arduous perfection; can trace the remote possibilities combined in a close union; the happy arrangement and the novel variation? He not only is

affected by the performance like the man of taste, but is influenced by a peculiar sensation; for while he contemplates the apparent beauties, he traces in his own mind those invisible processes by which the final beauty was accomplished. Hence arises that species of comparative criticism which one great author usually makes of his own manner with that of another great writer, and which so often causes him to be stigmatised with the most unreasonable vanity.

The character of GOLDSMITH, so underrated in his own day, exemplifies this principle in the literary character. That pleasing writer, without any perversion of intellect or inflation of vanity, might have contrasted his powers with those of JOHNSON, and might, according to his own ideas, have considered himself as not inferior to his more celebrated and learned rival.

Goldsmith might have preferred the felicity of his own genius, which like a native stream flowed from a natural source, to the elaborate powers of Johnson, which in some respect may be compared to those artificial waters which throw their sparkling currents in the air, to fall into marble basins. He might have considered that he had embellished philosophy with poetical elegance; and have preferred the paintings of his descriptions, to the terse versification and the pointed sentences of Johnson. He might have been more pleased with the faithful representations of English manners in his Vicar of Wakefield, than with the borrowed grandeur and the exotic fancy of the oriental Rasselas. He might have believed, what many excellent critics have believed, that in this age comedy requires more genius than tragedy; and with his audience he might have infinitely more esteemed his own original humour, than Johnson's rhetorical declamation. He might have thought, that with inferior literature he displayed superior genius, and with less profundity more gaiety. He might have considered, that the facility and vivacity of his pleasing compositions were preferable to that art, that habitual pomp, and that ostentatious eloquence, which prevail in the operose labours of Johnson. No one might be more sensible than himself, that he, according to the happy expression of Johnson (when his rival was in the grave) "tetigit et ornavit." Goldsmith, therefore, without any singular vanity, might have con-

4072

cluded from his own reasonings, that he was not an inferior writer to Johnson: all this not having been considered, he has come down to posterity as the vainest and the most jealous of writers; he whose dispositions were the most inoffensive, whose benevolence was the most extensive, and whose amiableness of heart has been concealed by its artlessness, and passed over in the sarcasms and sneers of a more eloquent rival, and his submissive partisans.

SELF-CHARACTERS.

There are two species of minor biography which may be discriminated; detailing our own life and portraying our own character. The writing our own life has been practised with various success; it is a delicate operation, a stroke too much may destroy the effect of the whole. If once we detect an author deceiving or deceived, it is a livid spot which infects the entire body. To publish one's own life has sometimes been a poor artifice to bring obscurity into notice: it is the ebriety of vanity, and the delirium of egotism. When a great man leaves some memorial of his days, the grave consecrates the motive. There are certain things which relate to ourselves, which no one can know so well; a great genius obliges posterity when he records them. But they must be composed with calmness, with simplicity, and with sincerity; the biographic sketch of Hume, written by himself, is a model of Attic simplicity. The Life of Lord Herbert is a biographical curiosity. The Memoirs of Sir William Jones, of Priestley, and of Gibbon, offer us the daily life of the student; and those of Colley Cibber are a fine picture of the self-painter. We have some other pieces of self-biography, precious to the philosopher.

The other species of minor biography, that of portraying our own character, could only have been invented by the most refined and the vainest nation. The French long cherished this darling egotism; and have a collection of these self-portraits in two bulky volumes. The brilliant Fléchier, and the

refined St. Evremond, have framed and glazed their portraits. Every writer then considered his character as necessary as his preface. The fashion seems to have passed over to our country; Farquhar has drawn his character in a letter to a lady; and others of our writers have given us their own miniatures.

There was, as a book in my possession will testify, a certain verse-maker of the name of Cantenac, who, in 1662, published in the city of Paris a volume, containing some thousands of verses, which were, as his countrymen express it, *de sa façon*, after his own way. He fell so suddenly into the darkest and deepest pit of oblivion, that not a trace of his memory would have remained, had he not condescended to give ample information of every particular relative to himself. He has acquainted us with his size, and tells us "that it is rare to see a man smaller than himself. I have that in common with all dwarfs, that if my head only were seen, I should be thought a large man." This atom in creation then describes his oval and full face; his fiery and eloquent eyes; his vermil lips; his robust constitution, and his effervescent passions. He appears to have been a most petulant, honest, and diminutive being.

The description of his intellect is the object of our curiosity. "I am as ambitious as any person can be; but I would not sacrifice my honour to my ambition. I am so sensible to contempt, that I bear a mortal and implacable hatred against those who contemn me, and I know I could never reconcile myself with them; but I spare no attentions for those I love; I would give them my fortune and my life. I sometimes lie; but generally in affairs of gallantry, where I voluntarily confirm falsehoods by oaths, without reflection, for swearing with me is a habit. I am told that my mind is brilliant, and that I have a certain manner in turning a thought which is quite my own. I am agreeable in conversation, though I confess I am often troublesome; for I maintain paradoxes to display my genius, which savour too much of scholastic subterfuges. I speak too often and too long; and as I have some reading, and a copious memory, I am fond of showing whatever I know. My judgment is not so solid as my wit is lively. I am often melan-

choly and unhappy; and this sombrous disposition proceeds from my numerous disappointments in life. My verse is preferred to my prose; and it has been of some use to me in pleasing the fair sex; poetry is most adapted to persuade women; but otherwise it has been of no service to me, and has, I fear, rendered me unfit for many advantageous occupations, in which I might have drudged. The esteem of the fair has, however, charmed away my complaints. This good fortune has been obtained by me, at the cost of many cares, and an unsubdued patience; for I am one of those who, in affairs of love, will suffer an entire year, to taste the pleasures of one day."

This character of Cantenac has some local features; for an English poet would hardly console himself with so much gaiety. The Frenchman's attachment to the ladies seems to be equivalent to the advantageous occupations he had lost. But as the miseries of a literary man, without conspicuous talents, are always the same at Paris as in London, there are some parts of this character of Cantenac which appear to describe them with truth. Cantenac was a man of honour; as warm in his resentment as his gratitude; but deluded by literary vanity, he became a writer in prose and verse, and while he saw the prospects of life closing on him, probably considered that the age was unjust. A melancholy example for certain volatile and fervent spirits, who, by becoming authors, either submit their felicity to the caprices of others, or annihilate the obscure comforts of life, and, like him, having "been told that their mind is brilliant, and that they have a certain manner in turning a thought," become writers, and complain that they are "often melancholy, owing to their numerous disappointments." Happy, however, if the obscure, yet too sensible writer, can suffer an entire year, for the enjoyment of a single day! But for this, a man must have been born in France.

ON READING.

Writing is justly denominated an art; I think that reading claims the same distinction. To adorn ideas with elegance is an act of the mind superior to that of receiving them; but to receive them with a happy discrimination, is the effect of a practised taste.

Yet it will be found that taste alone is not sufficient to obtain the proper end of reading. Two persons of equal taste rise from the perusal of the same book with very different notions; the one will have the ideas of the author at command, and find a new train of sentiment awakened; while the other quits his author in a pleasing distraction, but of the pleasures of reading nothing remains but tumultuous sensations.

To account for these different effects, we must have recourse to a logical distinction, which appears to reveal one of the great mysteries in the art of reading. Logicians distinguish between perceptions and ideas. Perception is that faculty of the mind which notices the simple impression of objects; but when these objects exist in the mind, and are there treasured and arranged as materials for reflection, then they are called ideas. A perception is like a transient sunbeam, which just shows the object, but leaves neither light nor warmth; while an idea is like the fervid beam of noon, which throws a settled and powerful light.

Many ingenious readers complain that their memory is defective, and their studies unfruitful. This defect arises from their indulging the facile pleasures of perceptions, in preference to the laborious habit of forming them into ideas. Perceptions require only the sensibility of taste, and their pleasures are continuous, easy, and exquisite. Ideas are an art of combination, and an exertion of the reasoning powers. Ideas are therefore labours; and for those who will not labour, it is unjust to complain, if they come from the harvest with scarcely a sheaf in their hands.

There are secrets in the art of reading, which tend to facilitate its purposes, by assisting the memory, and augmenting intellectual opulence. Some, our own ingenuity must form,

and perhaps every student has peculiar habits of study, as, in short-hand, almost every writer has a system of his own.

It is an observation of the elder Pliny, (who, having been a voluminous compiler, must have had great experience in the art of reading,) that there was no book so bad, but which contained something good. To read every book, would, however, be fatal to the interest of most readers; but it is not always necessary, in the pursuits of learning, to read every book entire. Of many books it is sufficient to seize the plan, and to examine some of their portions. Of the little supplement at the close of a volume, few readers conceive the utility; but some of the most eminent writers in Europe have been great adepts in the art of index reading. I, for my part, venerate the inventor of indexes; and I know not to whom to yield the preference, either to Hippocrates, who was the first great anatomiser of the human body, or to that unkown labourer in literature who first laid open the nerves and arteries of a book. Watts advises the perusal of the prefaces and the index of a book, as they both give light on its contents.

The ravenous appetite of Johnson for reading is expressed in a strong metaphor by Mrs. Knowles, who said, "he knows how to read better than any one; he gets at the substance of a book directly; he tears out the heart of it." Gibbon has a new idea in the Art of Reading; he says, "we ought not to attend to the order of our books so much as of our thoughts." The perusal of a particular work gives birth perhaps to ideas unconnected with the subject it treats; I pursue these ideas, and quit my proposed plan of reading. Thus in the midst of Homer he read Longinus; a chapter of Longinus led to an epistle of Pliny; and having finished Longinus, he followed the train of his ideas of the sublime and beautiful in the Enquiry of Burke, and concluded by comparing the ancient with the modern Longinus.

There are some mechanical aids in reading which may prove of great utility and form a kind of rejuvenescence of our early studies. Montaigne placed at the end of a book which he intended not to reperuse, the time he had read it, with a concise decision on its merits; "that," says he, "it

may thus represent to me the air and general idea I had conceived of the author, in reading the work." We have several of these annotations. Of Young the poet it is noticed, that whenever he came to a striking passage he folded the leaf; and that at his death, books have been found in his library which had long resisted the power of closing: a mode more easy than useful; for after a length of time they must be again read to know why they were folded. This difficulty is obviated by those who note in a blank leaf the pages to be referred to, with a word of criticism. Nor let us consider these minute directions as unworthy the most enlarged minds; by these petty exertions, at the most distant periods, may learning obtain its authorities, and fancy combine its ideas. Seneca, in sending some volumes to his friend Lucilius, accompanies them with notes of particular passages, "that," he observes, "you who only aim at the useful may be spared the trouble of examining them entire." I have seen books noted by Voltaire with a word of censure or approbation on the page itself, which was his usual practice; and these volumes are precious to every man of taste. Formey complained that the books he lent Voltaire were returned always disfigured by his remarks; but he was a writer of the old school.

A professional student should divide his readings into a *uniform* reading which is useful, and into a *diversified* reading which is pleasant. Guy Patin, an eminent physician and man of letters, had a just notion of this manner. He says, "I daily read Hippocrates, Galen, Fernel, and other illustrious masters of my profession; this I call my profitable readings. I frequently read Ovid, Juvenal, Horace, Seneca, Tacitus, and others, and these are my recreations." We must observe these distinctions; for it frequently happens that a lawyer or a physician, with great industry and love of study, by giving too much into his diversified readings, may utterly neglect what should be his uniform studies.

A reader is too often a prisoner attached to the triumphal car of an author of great celebrity; and when he ventures not to judge for himself, conceives, while he is reading the indifferent works of great authors, that the languor which he ex-

periences arises from his own defective taste. But the best writers, when they are voluminous, have a great deal of mediocrity.

On the other side, readers must not imagine that all the pleasures of composition depend on the author, for there is something which a reader himself must bring to the book that the book may please. There is a literary appetite, which the author can no more impart than the most skilful cook can give an appetency to the guests. When Cardinal Richelieu said to Godeau, that he did not understand his verses, the honest poet replied that it was not his fault. The temporary tone of the mind may be unfavourable to taste a work properly, and we have had many erroneous criticisms from great men, which may often be attributed to this circumstance. The mind communicates its infirm dispositions to the book, and an author has not only his own defects to account for, but also those of his reader. There is something in composition like the game of shuttlecock, where if the reader do not quickly rebound the feathered cork to the author, the game is destroyed, and the whole spirit of the work falls extinct.

A frequent impediment in reading is a disinclination in the mind to settle on the subject; agitated by incongruous and dissimilar ideas, it is with pain that we admit those of the author. But on applying ourselves with a gentle violence to the perusal of an interesting work, the mind soon assimilates to the subject; the ancient rabbins advised their young students to apply themselves to their readings, whether they felt an inclination or not, because, as they proceeded, they would find their disposition restored and their curiosity awakened.

Readers may be classed into an infinite number of divisions; but an author is a solitary being, who, for the same reason he pleases one, must consequently displease another. To have too exalted a genius is more prejudicial to his celebrity than to have a moderate one; for we shall find that the most popular works are not the most profound, but such as instruct those who require instruction, and charm those who are not too learned to taste their novelty. Lucilius, the satirist, said, that he did not write for Persius, for Scipio, and for Rutilius, persons eminent for their science, but for the the Tarentines,

Consentines, and the Sicilians. Montaigne has complained that he found his readers too learned, or too ignorant, and that he could only please a middle class, who have just learning enough to comprehend him. Congreve says, "there is in true beauty something which vulgar souls cannot admire." Balzac complains bitterly of readers,—"A period," he cries, "shall have cost us the labour of a day; we shall have distilled into an essay the essence of our mind; it may be a finished piece of art; and they think they are indulgent when they pronounce it to contain some pretty things, and that the style is not bad!" There is something in exquisite composition which ordinary readers can never understand.

Authors are vain, but readers are capricious. Some will only read old books, as if there were no valuable truths to be discovered in modern publications; while others will only read new books, as if some valuable truths are not among the old. Some will not read a book, because they are acquainted with the author; by which the reader may be more injured than the author: others not only read the book, but would also read the man; by which the most ingenious author may be injured by the most impertinent reader.

ON HABITUATING OURSELVES TO AN INDIVIDUAL PURSUIT.

Two things in human life are at continual variance, and without escaping from the one we must be separated from the other; and these are *ennui* and *pleasure*. Ennui is an afflicting sensation, if we may thus express it, from a want of sensation; and pleasure is greater pleasure according to the quantity of sensation. That sensation is received in proportion to the capacity of our organs; and that practice, or, as it has been sometimes called, "educated feeling," enlarges this capacity, is evident in such familiar instances as those of the blind, who have a finer tact, and the jeweller, who has a finer sight, than other men who are not so deeply interested in refining their vision and their touch. Intense attention is, there-

fore, a certain means of deriving more numerous pleasures from its object.

Hence it is that the poet, long employed on a poem, has received a quantity of pleasure which no reader can ever feel. In the progress of any particular pursuit, there are a hundred fugitive sensations which are too intellectual to be embodied into language. Every artist knows that between the thought that first gave rise to his design, and each one which appears in it, there are innumerable intermediate evanescences of sensation which no man felt but himself. These pleasures are in number according to the intenseness of his faculties and the quantity of his labour.

It is so in any particular pursuit, from the manufacturing of pins to the construction of philosophical systems. Every individual can exert that quantity of mind necessary to his wants and adapted to his situation; the quality of pleasure is nothing in the present question; for I think that we are mistaken concerning the gradations of human felicity. It does at first appear, that an astronomer rapt in abstraction, while he gazes on a star, must feel a more exquisite delight than a farmer who is conducting his team; or a poet experiences a higher gratification in modulating verses than a trader in arranging sums. But the happiness of the ploughman and the trader may be as satisfactory as that of the astronomer and the poet. Our mind can only be conversant with those sensations which surround us, and possessing the skill of managing them, we can form an artificial felicity; it is certain that what the soul does not feel no more affects it, than what the eye does not see. It is thus that the trader, habituated to humble pursuits, can never be unhappy because he is not the general of an army; for this idea of felicity he has never received. The philosopher who gives his entire years to the elevated pursuits of mind, is never unhappy because he is not in possession of an Indian opulence, for the idea of accumulating this exotic splendour has never entered the range of his combinations. Nature, an impartial mother, renders felicity as perfect in the school-boy who scourges his top, as in the astronomer who regulates his star. The thing contained can only be equal to the container; a full glass is as full as a full bot-

tle; and a human soul may be as much satisfied in the lowest of human beings as in the highest.

In the progress of an individual pursuit, what philosophers call the associating or suggesting idea is ever busied, and in its beautiful effects genius is most deeply concerned; for besides those trains of thought the great artist falls into during his actual composition, a distinct habit accompanies real genius through life in the activity of his associating idea, when not at his work; it is at all times pressing and conducting his spontaneous thoughts, and every object which suggests them, however apparently trivial or unconnected towards itself, making what it wills its own, while instinctively it seems inattentive to whatever has no tendency to its own purpose.

Many peculiar advantages attend the cultivation of one master passion or occupation. In superior minds it is a sovereign that exiles others, and in inferior minds it enfeebles pernicious propensities. It may render us useful to our fellow citizens, and it imparts the most perfect independence to ourselves. It is observed by a great mathematician, that a geometrician would not be unhappy in a desert.

This unity of design, with a centripetal force, draws all the rays of our existence; and often, when accident has turned the mind firmly to one object, it has been discovered that its occupation is another name for happiness; for it is a mean of escaping from incongruous sensations. It secures us from the dark vacuity of soul, as well as from the whirlwind of ideas; reason itself is a passion, but a passion full of serenity.

It is however observable of those who have devoted themselves to an individual object, that its importance is incredibly enlarged to their sensations. Intense attention magnifies like a microscope; but it is possible to apologise for their apparent extravagance from the consideration, that they really observe combinations not perceived by others of inferior application. That this passion has been carried to a curious violence of affection, literary history affords numerous instances. In reading Dr. Burney's "Musical Travels," it would seem that music was the prime object of human life; Richardson the painter, in his treatise on his beloved art, closes all by affirming, that "*Raphael* is not only *equal*, but *superior* to a

Virgil, or a *Livy*, or a *Thucydides*, or a *Homer!*" and that painting can reform our manners, increase our opulence, honour, and power. Denina, in his "Revolutions of Literature," tells us, that to excel in historical composition requires more ability than is exercised by the excelling masters of any other art; because it requires not only the same erudition, genius, imagination, and taste, necessary for a poet, a painter, or a philosopher, but the historian must also have some peculiar qualifications: this served as a prelude to his own history. Helvetius, an enthusiast in the fine arts and polite literature, has composed a poem on Happiness; and imagines that it consists in an exclusive love of the cultivation of letters and the arts. All this shows that the more intensely we attach ourselves to an individual object, the more numerous and the more perfect are our sensations; if we yield to the distracting variety of opposite pursuits with an equal passion, our soul is placed amid a continual shock of ideas, and happiness is lost by mistakes.

ON NOVELTY IN LITERATURE.

"All is said," exclaims the lively La Bruyère; but at the same moment, by his own admirable Reflections, confutes the dreary system he would establish. An opinion of the exhausted state of literature has been a popular prejudice of remote existence; and an unhappy idea of a wise ancient, who, even in his day, lamented that "of books there is no end," has been transcribed in many books. He who has critically examined any branch of literature has discovered how little of original invention is to be found even in the most excellent works. To add a little to his predecessors, satisfies the ambition of the first geniuses. The popular notion of literary novelty is an idea more fanciful than exact. Many are yet to learn that our admired originals are not such as they mistake them to be; that the plans of the most original performances have been borrowed; and that the thoughts of the most admired compositions are not wonderful discoveries, but only

truths, which the ingenuity of the author, by arranging the intermediate and accessory ideas, has unfolded from that confused sentiment, which those experience who are not accustomed to think with depth, or to discriminate with accuracy. This Novelty in Literature is, as Pope defines it,

"What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd."

Novelty, in its rigid acceptation, will not be found in any judicious production.

Voltaire looked on every thing as imitation. He observes that the most original writers borrowed one from another, and says that the instruction we gather from books is like fire; we fetch it from our neighbours, kindle it at home, and communicate it to others, till it becomes the property of all. He traces some of the finest compositions to the fountain-head; and the reader smiles when he perceives that they have travelled in regular succession through China, India, Arabia, and Greece, to France and to England.

To the obscurity of time are the ancients indebted for that originality in which they are imagined to excel, but we know how frequently they accuse each other; and to have borrowed copiously from preceding writers was not considered criminal by such illustrious authors as Plato and Cicero. The Eneid of Virgil displays little invention in the incidents, for it unites the plan of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

Our own early writers have not more originality than modern genius may aspire to reach. To imitate and to rival the Italians and the French, formed their devotion. Chaucer, Gower, and Gawin Douglas, were all spirited imitators, and frequently only masterly translators. Spencer, the father of so many poets, is himself the child of the Ausonian Muse. Milton is incessantly borrowing from the poetry of his day. In the beautiful Masque of Comus he preserved all the circumstances of the work he imitated. Tasso opened for him the Tartarean Gulf; the sublime description of the bridge may be found in Sadi, who borrowed it from the Turkish theology; the paradise of fools is a wild flower, transplanted from the wilderness of Ariosto. The rich poetry of Gray is a wonderful tissue, woven on the frames, and composed with

the gold threads, of others. To Cervantes we owe Butler; and the united abilities of three great wits, in their Martinus Scriblerus, could find no other mode of conveying their powers but by imitating at once Don Quixote and Monsieur Oufle. Pope, like Boileau, had all the ancients and moderns in his pay; the contributions he levied were not the pillages of a bandit, but the taxes of a monarch. Swift is much indebted for the plans of his two very original performances: he owes the "Travels of Gulliver" to the "Voyages of Cyrano de Bergerac to the Sun and Moon;" a writer, who, without the acuteness of Swift, has wilder flashes of fancy; Joseph Warton has observed many of Swift's strokes in Bishop Godwin's "Man in the Moon," who, in his turn, must have borrowed his work from Cyrano. "The Tale of a Tub" is an imitation of such various originals, that they are too numerous here to mention. Wotton observed justly, that in many places, the author's wit is not his own. Dr. Feriar's "Essay on the Imitations of Sterne" might be considerably augmented. Such are the writers, however, who imitate, but remain inimitable!

Montaigne, with honest naïveté, compares his writings to a thread that binds the flowers of others; and that by incessantly pouring the waters of a few good old authors into his sieve, some drops fall upon his paper. The good old man elsewhere acquaints us with a certain stratagem of his own invention, consisting of his inserting whole sentences from the ancients, without acknowledgment, that the critics might blunder, by giving *nazardes* to Seneca and Plutarch, while they imagined they tweaked his nose. Petrarch, who is not the inventor of that tender poetry of which he is the model, and Boccaccio, called the father of Italian novels, have alike profited by a studious perusal of writers, who are now only read by those who have more curiosity than taste. Boiardo has imitated Pulci, and Ariosto, Boiardo. The madness of Orlando Furioso, though it wears, by its extravagance, a very original air, is only imitated from Sir Launcelot in the old romance of "Mort Arthur," with which, Warton observes, it agrees in every leading circumstance; and what is the Cardenio of Cervantes but the Orlando of Aristo? Tasso

has imitated the Iliad, and enriched his poem with episodes from the Eneid. It is curious to observe, that even Dante, wild and original as he appears, when he meets Virgil in the Inferno, warmly expresses his gratitude for the many fine passages for which he was indebted to his works, and on which he says he had "long meditated." Molière and La Fontaine are considered to possess as much originality as any of the French writers; yet the learned Menage calls Molière "un grand et habile picoreur;" and Boileau tells us, that La Fontaine borrowed his style and matter from Marot and Rabelais, and took his subjects from Boccaccio, Poggius, and Ariosto. Nor was the eccentric Rabelais the inventor of most of his burlesque narratives; and he is a very close imitator of Folengo, the inventor of the macaronic poetry, and not a little indebted to the old *Facezie* of the Italians. Indeed Marot, Villon, as well as those we have noticed, profited by the authors anterior to the age of Francis I. La Bruyère incorporates whole passages of Publius Syrus in his work, as the translator of the latter abundantly shows. To the "Turkish Spy" was Montesquieu beholden for his "Persian Letters," and a numerous crowd are indebted to Montesquieu. Corneille made a liberal use of Spanish literature; and the pure waters of Racine flowed from the fountains of Sophocles and Euripides.

This vein of imitation runs through the productions of our greatest authors. Vigneul de Marville compares some of the first writers to bankers who are rich with the assembled fortunes of individuals, and who would be often ruined were they too hardly drawn on.

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ.

Pliny, in an epistle to Tuscus, advises him to intermix among his severer studies the softening charms of poetry; and notices a species of poetical composition which merits critical animadversion. I shall quote Pliny in the language of his elegant translator. He says, "These pieces commonly

go under the title of poetical amusements; but these amusements have sometimes gained as much reputation to their authors as works of a more serious nature. It is surprising how much the mind is entertained and enlivened by these little poetical compositions, as they turn upon subjects of gallantry, satire, tenderness, politeness, and everything, in short, that concerns life, and the affairs of the world."

This species of poetry has been carried to its utmost perfection by the French. It has been discriminated by them, from the mass of poetry, under the apt title of "*Poésies légères*," and sometimes it has been significantly called "*Vers de Société*." The French writers have formed a body of this fugitive poetry, which no European nation can rival; and to which both the language and genius appear to be greatly favourable.

The "*Poésies légères* are not merely compositions of a light and gay turn, but are equally employed as a vehicle for tender and pathetic sentiment. They are never long, for they are consecrated to the amusement of society. The author appears to have composed them for his pleasure, not for his glory; and he charms his readers, because he seems careless of their approbation.

Every delicacy of sentiment must find its delicacy of expression, and every tenderness of thought must be softened by the tenderest tones. Nothing trite or trivial must enfeeble and chill the imagination; nor must the ear be denied its gratification, by a rough or careless verse. In these works nothing is pardoned; a word may disturb, a line may destroy the charm.

The passions of the poet may form the subject of his verse. It is in these writings he delineates himself; he reflects his tastes, his desires, his humours, his amours, and even his defects. In other poems, the poet disappears under the feigned character he assumes; here alone he speaks, here he acts. He makes a confidant of the reader, interests him in his hopes and his sorrows; we admire the poet, and conclude with esteeming the man. The poem is the complaint of a lover, or a compliment to a patron, a vow of friendship, or a hymn of gratitude.

These poems have often, with great success, displayed pictures of manners; for here the poet colours the objects with all the hues of social life. Reflection must not be amplified, for these are pieces devoted to the fancy; a scene may be painted throughout the poem; a sentiment must be conveyed in a verse. In the "Grongar Hill" of Dyer, we discover some strokes which may serve to exemplify this criticism. The poet, contemplating the distant landscape, observes—

> "A step methinks may pass the stream,
> So little, distant dangers seem;
> So we mistake the future's face,
> Eyed through Hope's deluding glass."

It must not be supposed that, because these poems are concise, they are of easy production; a poet's genius may not be diminutive because his pieces are so; nor must we call them, as a fine sonnet has been called, a difficult trifle. A circle may be very small, yet it may be as mathematically beautiful and perfect as a larger one. To such compositions we may apply the observation of an ancient critic, that though a little thing gives perfection, yet perfection is not a little thing.

The poet must be alike polished by an intercourse with the world as with the studies of taste; one to whom labour is negligence, refinement a science, and art a nature.

Genius will not always be sufficient to impart that grace of amenity. Many of the French nobility, who cultivated poetry, have, therefore, oftener excelled in these poetical amusements than more professed poets. France once delighted in the amiable and ennobled names of Nivernois, Boufflers, and St. Algnan; they have not been considered as unworthy rivals of Chaulieu and Bernard, of Voltaire and Gresset.

All the minor odes of Horace, and the entire Anacreon, are compositions of this kind; effusions of the heart, and pictures of the imagination, which were produced in the convivial, the amatory, and the pensive hour. Our nation has not always been successful in these performances; they have not

been kindred to its genius. With Charles II. something of a gayer and more airy taste was communicated to our poetry, but it was desultory and incorrect. Waller, both by his habits and his genius, was well adapted to excel in this lighter poetry; and he has often attained the perfection which the state of the language then permitted. Prior has a variety of sallies; but his humour is sometimes gross, and his versification is sometimes embarrassed. He knew the value of these charming pieces, and he had drunk of this burgundy in the vineyard itself. He has some translations, and some plagiarisms; but some of his verses to Chloe are eminently airy and pleasing. A diligent selection from our fugitive poetry might, perhaps, present us with many of these minor poems; but the "*Vers de Société*" form a species of poetical composition which may still be employed with great success.

THE GENIUS OF MOLIÈRE.

The genius of comedy not only changes with the age, but appears different among different people. Manners and customs not only vary among European nations, but are alike mutable from one age to another, even in the same people. These vicissitudes are often fatal to comic writers; our old school of comedy has been swept off the stage; and our present uniformity of manners has deprived our modern writers of those rich sources of invention when persons living more isolated, society was less monotonous; and Jonson and Shadwell gave us what they called "*the humours*,"—that is, the individual or particular characteristics of men.

But however tastes and modes of thinking may be inconstant, and customs and manners alter, at bottom the groundwork is Nature's, in every production of comic genius. A creative genius guided by an unerring instinct, though he draws after the contemporary models of society, will retain his pre-eminence beyond his own age and his own nation; what was temporary and local disappears, but what appertains to universal nature endures. The scholar dwells on the grotesque

pleasantries of the sarcastic Aristophanes, though the Athenian manners, and his exotic personages, have long vanished.

MOLIÈRE was a creator in the *art of comedy*—and although his personages were the contemporaries of Louis the Fourteenth, and his manners, in the critical acceptation of the term, local and temporary, yet his admirable genius opened that secret path of Nature, which is so rarely found among the great names of the most literary nations. CERVANTES remains single in Spain; in England SHAKESPEARE is a consecrated name; and centuries may pass away before the French people shall witness another MOLIÈRE.

The history of this comic poet is the tale of powerful genius creating itself amidst the most adverse elements. We have the progress of that self-education which struck out an untried path of its own, from the time Molière had not yet acquired his art, to the glorious days when he gave his country a Plautus in his farce, a Terence in his composition, and a Menander in his moral truths. But the difficulties overcome, and the disappointments incurred, his modesty and his confidence, and, what was not less extraordinary, his own domestic life in perpetual conflict with his character, open a more strange career, in some respects, than has happened to most others of the high order of his genius.

It was long the fate of Molière to experience that restless importunity of genius which feeds on itself, till it discovers the pabulum it seeks. Molière not only suffered that tormenting impulse, but it was accompanied by the unhappiness of a mistaken direction. And this has been the lot of some who for many years have thus been lost to themselves and to the public.

A man born among the obscure class of the people, thrown among the itinerant companies of actors, for France had not yet a threatre, occupied to his last hours by too devoted a management of his own dramatic corps; himself, too, an original actor in the characters by himself created; with no better models of composition than the Italian farces *all' improvista*, and whose fantastic gaiety he, to the last, loved too well; becomes the personal favourite of the most magnificent monarch, and the intimate of the most refined circles. Thought-

ful observer of these new scenes and new personages, he sports with the affected *précieuses* and the fluttering *marquises*, as with the *naïve* ridiculousness of the *bourgeois*, and the wild pride and egotism of the *parvenus;* and with more profound designs and a hardier hand, unmasks the impostures of false *pretenders* in all professions. His scenes, such was their verity, seem but the reflections of his reminiscences. His fertile facility when touching on transient follies; his wide comprehension, and his moralising vein, in his more elevated comedy, display, in this painter of man, the poet and the philosopher, and, above all, the great moral satirist. Molière has shown that the most successful reformer of the manners of a people is a great comic poet.

The youth *Pocquelin*—this was his family name—was designed by the *tapissier*, his father, to be the heir of the hereditary honours of an ancient standing, which had maintained the Pocquelins through four or five generations, by the articles of a furnishing upholsterer. His grandfather was a haunter of the small theatres of that day, and the boy often accompanied this venerable critic of the family to his favourite recreations. The actors were usually more excellent than their pieces; some had carried the mimetic art to the perfection of eloquent gesticulation. In these loose scenes of inartificial and burlesque pieces was the genius of Molière cradled and nursed. The changeful scenes of the *Théâtre de Bourgogne* deeply busied the boy's imagination, to the great detriment of the *tapisserie* of all the Pocquelins.

The father groaned, the grandfather clapped, the boy remonstrated, till, at fourteen years of age, he was consigned, as "un mauvais sujet," (so his father qualified him,) to a college of the Jesuits at Paris, where the author of the "Tartuffe" passed five years, studying—for the bar!

Philosophy and logic were waters which he deeply drank; and sprinklings of his college studies often pointed the satire of his more finished comedies. To ridicule false learning and false taste, one must be intimate with the true.

On his return to the metropolis, the old humour broke out at the representation of the inimitable Scaramouch of the Italian theatre. The irresistible passion drove him from his

law studies, and cast young Pocquelin among a company of amateur actors, whose fame soon enabled them not to play gratuitously. Pocquelin was the manager and the modeller, for, under his studious eye, this company were induced to imitate Nature with the simplicity the poet himself wrote.

The prejudices of the day, both civil and religious, had made these private theatres, no great national theatre yet existing, the resource only of the idler, the dissipated, and even of the unfortunate in society. The youthful adventurer affectionately offered a free admission to the dear Pocquelins. They rejected their *entrées* with horror, and sent their genealogical tree, drawn afresh, to shame the truant who had wantoned into the luxuriance of genius. To save the honour of the parental upholsterers, Pocquelin concealed himself under the immortal name of Molière.

The future creator of French comedy had now passed his thirtieth year, and as yet his reputation was confined to his own dramatic corps—a pilgrim in the caravan of ambulatory comedy. He had provided several temporary novelties. Boileau regretted the loss of one, "Le Docteur Amoureux;" and in others we detect the abortive conceptions of some of his future pieces. The severe judgment of Molière suffered his skeletons to perish, but when he had discovered the art of comic writing, with equal discernment he resuscitated them.

Not only had Molière not yet discovered the true bent of his genius, but, still more unfortunate, he had as greatly mistaken it as when he proposed turning *avocat*, for he imagined that his most suitable character was tragic. He wrote a tragedy, and he acted in a tragedy; the tragedy he composed was condemned at Bordeaux; the mortified poet flew to Grenoble; still the unlucky tragedy haunted his fancy; he looked on it with paternal eyes, in which there were tears. Long after, when Racine, a youth, offered him a very unactable tragedy, Molière presented him with his own:—"Take this, for I am convinced that the subject is highly tragic, notwithstanding my failure." The great dramatic poet of France opened his career by recomposing the condemned tragedy of the comic wit, in "La Thebaïde." In the illusion that he was a great tragic actor, deceived by his own susceptibility,

though his voice denied the tones of passion, he acted in one of Corneille's tragedies, and quite allayed the alarm of a rival company on the announcement. It was not, however, so when the author-actor vivified one of his own native personages; then, inimitably comic, every new representation seemed to be a new creation.

It is a remarkable feature, though not perhaps a singular one, in the character of this great comic writer, that he was one of the most serious of men, and even of a melancholic temperament. One of his lampooners wrote a satirical comedy on the comic poet, where he figures as "Molière hypochondre." Boileau, who knew him intimately, happily characterised Molière as *le Contemplateur*. This deep pensiveness is revealed in his physiognomy.

The genius of Molière, long undiscovered by himself, in its first attempts in a higher walk did not move alone: it was crutched by imitation, and it often deigned to plough with another's heifer. He copied whole scenes from Italian comedies and plots from Italian novelists: his sole merit was their improvement. The great comic satirist, who hereafter was to people the stage with a dramatic crowd who were to live on to posterity, had not yet struck at that secret vein of originality—the fairy treasure which one day was to cast out such a prodigality of invention. His two first comedies, "L'Etourdi" and "Le Dépit Amoureux," which he had only ventured to bring out in a provincial theatre, were grafted on Italian and Spanish comedy. Nothing more original offered to his imagination than the Roman, the Italian, and the Spanish drama; the cunning adroit slave of Terence; the tricking, bustling *Gracioso* of modern Spain; old fathers, the dupes of some scape-grace, or of their own senile follies, with lovers sighing at cross purposes. The germ of his future powers may, indeed, be discovered in these two comedies, for insensibly to himself he had fallen into some scenes of natural simplicity. In "L'Etourdi," Mascarille, "le roi des serviteurs," which Molière himself admirably personated, is one of those defunct characters of the Italian comedy no longer existing in society; yet, like our Touchstone, but infinitely richer, this new ideal personage still delights by the fertility

of his expedients and his perpetual and vigorous gaiety. In "Le Dépit Amoureux" is the exquisite scene of the quarrel and reconciliation of the lovers. In this fine scene, though perhaps but an amplification of the well known ode of Horace, *Donec gratus eram tibi*, Molière consulted his own feelings, and betrayed his future genius.

It was after an interval of three or four years that the provincial celebrity of these comedies obtained a representation at Paris; their success was decisive. This was an evidence of public favour which did not accompany Molière's more finished productions, which were so far unfortunate that they were more intelligible to the few; in fact, the first comedies of Molière were not written above the popular taste; the spirit of true comedy, in a profound knowledge of the heart of man, and in the delicate discriminations of individual character, was yet unknown. Molière was satisfied to excel his predecessors, but he had not yet learned his art.

The rising poet was now earnestly sought after; a more extended circle of society now engaged his contemplative habits. He looked around on living scenes no longer through the dim spectacles of the old comedy, and he projected a new species, which was no longer to depend on its conventional grotesque personages and its forced incidents; he aspired to please a more critical audience, by making his dialogue the conversation of society, and his characters its portraits.

Introduced to the literary coterie of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, a new view opened on the favoured poet. To occupy a seat in this envied circle was a distinction in society. The professed object of this reunion of nobility and literary persons, at the hôtel of the marchioness of Rambouillet, was to give a higher tone to all France, by the cultivation of the language, the intellectual refinement of their compositions, and last, but not least, to inculcate the extremest delicacy of manners. The recent civil dissensions had often violated the urbanity of the court, and a grossness prevailed in conversation which offended the scrupulous. This critical circle was composed of both sexes. They were to be the arbiters of taste, the legislators of criticism, and, what was less tolerable,

the models of genius. No work was to be stamped into currency which bore not the mint-mark of the hôtel.

In the annals of fashion and literature, no coterie has presented a more instructive and amusing exhibition of the abuses of learning, and the aberrations of ill-regulated imaginations, than the Hôtel de Rambouillet, by its ingenious absurdities. Their excellent design to refine the language, the manners and even morality itself, branched out into every species of false refinement; their science ran into trivial pedantries, their style into a fantastic jargon, and their spiritualising delicacy into the very puritanism of prudery. Their frivolous distinction between the mind and the heart, which could not always be made to go together, often perplexed them as much as their own jargon, which was not always intelligible, even to the initiated. The French Academy is said to have originated in the first meetings of the Hôtel de Rambouillet; and it is probable that some sense and taste, in its earliest days, may have visited this society, for we do not begin such refined follies without some show of reason.

The local genius of the hôtel was feminine, though the most glorious men of the literature of France were among its votaries. The great magnet was the famed Mademoiselle Scudery, whose voluminous romances were their code; and it is supposed these tomes preserve some of their lengthened *conversaziones*. In the novel system of gallantry of this great inventor of amorous and metaphysical "twaddle," the ladies were to be approached as beings nothing short of celestial paragons; they were addressed in a language not to be found in any dictionary but their own, and their habits were more fantastic than their language: a sort of domestic chivalry formed their etiquette. Their baptismal names were to them profane, and their assumed ones were drawn from the folio romances—those Bibles of love. At length all ended in a sort of Freemasonry of gallantry, which had its graduated orders, and whoever was not admitted into the mysteries was not permitted to prolong his existence—that is, his residence among them. The apprenticeship of the craft was to be served under certain *Introducers to Ruelles*.

Their card of invitation was either a rondeau or an enigma,

which served as a subject to open conversation. The lady received her visitors reposing on that throne of beauty, a bed placed in an alcove; the toilet was magnificently arranged. The space between the bed and the wall was called the *Ruelle*, the diminutive of *la Rue;* and in this narrow street, or "Fop's alley," walked the favoured. But the chevalier who was graced by the honorary title of *l'Alcoviste*, was at once master of the household and master of the ceremonies. His character is pointedly defined by St. Evremond, as "a lover whom the *Précieuse* is to love without enjoyment, and to enjoy in good earnest her husband with aversion." The scene offered no indecency to such delicate minds, and much less the impassioned style which passed between *les chères*, as they called themselves. Whatever offered an idea, of what their jargon denominated *charnelle*, was treason and exile. Years passed ere the hand of the elected maiden was kissed by its martyr. The celebrated Julia d'Angennes was beloved by the duke de Montausier, but fourteen years elapsed ere she would yield a "yes." When the faithful Julia was no longer blooming, the Alcoviste duke gratefully took up the remains of her beauty. . . . . .

Their more curious project was the reform of the style of conversation, to purify its grossness, and invent novel terms for familiar objects. Ménage drew up a "Petition of the Dictionaries," which, by their severity of taste, had nearly become superannuated. They succeeded better with the *marchandes des modes* and the jewellers, furnishing a vocabulary excessively *précieuse*, by which people bought their old wares with new names. At length they were so successful in their neology, that with great difficulty they understood one another. It is, however, worth observation, that the orthography invented by the *précieuses*, who, for their convenience, rejected all the redundant letters in words, was adopted and is now used; and their pride of exclusiveness in society introduced the singular term *s'encanailler*, to describe a person who haunted low company, while their morbid purity had ever on their lips the word *obscénité*, terms which Molière ridicules, but whose expressiveness has preserved them in the language.

Ridiculous as some of these extravagances now appear to

us, they had been so closely interwoven with the elegance of the higher ranks, and so intimately associated with genius and literature, that the veil of fashion consecrated almost the mystical society, since we find among its admirers the most illustrious names of France.

Into this elevated and artificial circle of society, our youthful and unsophisticated poet was now thrown, with a mind not vitiated by any prepossessions of false taste, studious of nature and alive to the ridiculous. But how was the comic genius to strike at the follies of his illustrious friends—to strike, but not to wound? A provincial poet and actor to enter hostilely into the sacred precincts of these Exclusives? Tormented by his genius, Molière produced "Les Précieuses Ridicules," but admirably parried, in his preface, any application to them, by averring that it was aimed at their imitators —their spurious mimics in the country. The "Précieuses Ridicules" was acted in the presence of the assembled Hôtel de Rambouillet with immense applause. A central voice from the pit, anticipating the host of enemies and the fame of the reformer of comedy, exclaimed, "Take courage, Molière, this is true comedy." The learned Ménage was the only member of the society who had the good sense to detect the drift; he perceived the snake in the grass. "We must now," said this sensible pedant (in a remote allusion to the fate of idolatry and the introduction of Christianity) to the poetical pedant Chapelain, "follow the counsel which St. Rémi gave to Clovis: we must burn all that we adored, and adore what we have burned." The success of the comedy was universal; the company doubled their prices; the country gentry flocked to witness the marvellous novelty, which far exposed that false taste, that romance-impertinence, and that sickly affectation, which had long disturbed the quiet of families. Cervantes had not struck more adroitly at Spanish rhodomontade.

At this universal reception of the "Précieuses Ridicules," Molière, it is said, exclaimed,—"I need no longer study Plautus and Terence, nor poach in the fragments of Menander; I have only to study the world." It may be doubtful whether the great comic satirist at that moment caught the sudden revelation of his genius, as he did subsequently in his "Tar-

tuffe," his "Misanthrope," his "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," and others. The "Précieuses Ridicules," was the germ of his more elaborate "Femmes Savantes," which was not produced till after an interval of twelve years.

Molière returned to his old favourite *canevas*, or plots of Italian farces and novels, and Spanish comedies, which, being always at hand, furnished comedies of intrigue. "L'Ecole des Maris" is an inimitable model of this class.

But comedies which derive their chief interest from the ingenious mechanism of their plots, however poignant the delight of the artifice of the *denouement*, are somewhat like an epigram, once known the brilliant point is blunded by repetition. This is not the fate of those representations of men's actions, passions, and manners, in the more enlarged sphere of human nature, where an eternal interest is excited, and will charm on the tenth repetition.

No! Molière had not yet discovered his true genius; he was not yet emancipated from his old seductions. A rival company was reputed to have the better actors for tragedy, and Molière resolved to compose a heroic drama on the passion of jealousy, a favourite one on which he was incessantly ruminating. "Don Garcie de Navarre, ou le Prince Jaloux," the hero personated by himself, terminated by the hisses of the audience.

The fall of the "Prince Jaloux" was nearly fatal to the tender reputation of the poet and the actor. The world became critical: the marquises, and the précieuses, and recently the bourgeois, who was sore from "Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire," were up in arms; and the rival theatre maliciously raised the halloo, flattering themselves that the comic genius of their dreaded rival would be extinguished by the ludicrous convulsed hiccough to which Molière was liable in his tragic tones, but which he adroitly managed in his comic parts.

But the genius of Molière was not to be daunted by cabals, nor even injured by his own imprudence. "Le Prince Jaloux" was condemned in February 1661, and the same year produced "L'Ecole des Maris" and "Les Facheux." The

happy genius of the poet opened on his Zoiluses a series of dramatic triumphs.

Foreign critics, Tiraboschi and Schlegel, have depreciated the Frenchman's invention, by insinuating, that were all that Molière borrowed taken from him, little would remain of his own. But they were not aware of his dramatic creation, even when he appropriated the slight inventions of others; they have not distinguished the eras of the genius of Molière, and the distinct classes of his comedies. Molière had the art of amalgamating many distinct inventions of others into a single inimitable whole. Whatever might be the herbs and the reptiles thrown into the mystical caldron, the incantation of genius proved to be truly magical.

Facility and fecundity may produce inequality; but when a man of genius works, they are imbued with a raciness which the anxious diligence of inferior minds can never yield. Shakespeare, probably, poured forth many scenes in this spirit. The multiplicity of the pieces of Molière, their different merits, and their distinct classes—all written within the space of twenty years—display, if any poet ever did, this wonder-working faculty. The truth is, that few of his comedies are finished works; he never satisfied himself, even in his most applauded productions. Necessity bound him to furnish novelties for his theatre; he rarely printed any work. "Les Fâcheux," an admirable series of scenes, in three acts, and in verse, was "planned, written, rehearsed, and represented in a single fortnight." Many of his dramatic effusions were precipitated on the stage: the humorous scenes of "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" were thrown out to enliven a royal fête.

This versatility and felicity of composition made everything, with Molière, a subject for comedy. He invented two novelties, such as the stage had never before witnessed. Instead of a grave defence from the malice of his critics, and the flying gossip of the court circle, Molière found out the art of congregating the public to "The Quarrels of Authors." He dramatised his critics. In a comedy without a plot, and in scenes which seemed rather spoken than written, and with characters more real than personated, he displayed his genius by collecting whatever had been alleged to depreciate it; and

"La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes" is still a delightful production. This singular drama resembles the sketch-book of an artist, the *croquis* of portraits,—the loose hints of thoughts, many of which we discover were more fully delineated in his subsequent pieces. With the same rapid conception, he laid hold of his embarrassments to furnish dramatic novelties as expeditiously as the king required. Louis XIV was himself no indifferent critic, and more than once suggested an incident or a character to his favourite poet. In "L'Impromptu de Versailles," Molière appears in his own person, and in the midst of his whole company, with all the irritable impatience of a manager who had no piece ready. Amidst this green-room bustle, Molière is advising, reprimanding, and imploring his "ladies and gentlemen." The characters in this piece are, in fact, the actors themselves, who appear under their own names; and Molière himself reveals many fine touches of his own poetical character, as well as his managerial. The personal pleasantries on his own performers, and the hints for plots, and the sketches of character which the poet incidentally throws out, form a perfect dramatic novelty. Some of these he himself subsequently adopted, and others have been followed up by some dramatists without rivalling Molière. The Figaro of Beaumarchais is a descendant of the Mascarille of Molière, but the glory of rivalling Molière was reserved for our own stage. Sheridan's "Critic, or A Tragedy rehearsed," is a congenial dramatic satire with these two pieces of Molière.

The genius of Molière had now stepped out of the restricted limits of the old comedy; he now looked on the moving world with other eyes, and he pursued the ridiculous in society. These fresher studies were going on at all hours, and every object was contemplated with a view to comedy. His most vital characters have been traced to living originals, and some of his most ludicrous scenes had occurred in reality before they delighted the audience. Monsieur Jourdain had expressed his astonishment, "qu'il faisait de la prose," in the Count de Soissons, one of the uneducated noblemen devoted to the chase. The memorable scene between Trissotin and Vadius, their mutual compliments terminating in their mutual contempt,

had been rehearsed by their respective authors, the Abbé Cottin and Ménage. The stultified booby of Limoges, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, and the mystified millionaire, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, were copied after life, as was *Sganarelle*, in "Le Médecin malgré lui." The portraits in that gallery of dramatic paintings, "Le Misanthrope," have names inscribed under them; and the immortal *Tartuffe* was a certain Bishop of Autun. No dramatist has conceived with greater variety the female character; the women of Molière have a distinctness of feature, and are touched with a freshness of feeling. Molière studied nature, and his comic humour is never checked by that unnatural wit where the poet, the more he discovers himself, the farther he removes himself from the personage of his creation. The quickening spell which hangs over the dramas of Molière is this close attention to nature, wherein he greatly resembles our Shakespeare, for all springs from its source. His unobtrusive genius never occurs to us in following up his characters, and a whole scene leaves on our mind a complete but imperceptible effect.

The style of Molière has often been censured by the fastidiousness of his native critics, as *bas* and *du style familier*. This does not offend the foreigner, who is often struck by its simplicity and vigour. Molière preferred the most popular and naïve expressions, as well as the most natural incidents, to a degree which startled the morbid delicacy of fashion and fashionable critics. He had frequent occasions to resist their petty remonstrances; and whenever Molière introduced an incident, or made an illusion of which he knew the truth, and which with him had a settled meaning, this master of human life trusted to his instinct and his art.

This pure and simple taste, ever rare at Paris, was the happy portion of the genius of this Frenchman. Hence he delighted to try his farcical pieces, for we cannot imagine that they were his more elevated comedies, on his old maid-servant. This maid, probably, had a keen relish for comic humour, for once when Molière read to her the comedy of another writer as his own, she soon detected the trick, declaring that it could not be her master's. Hence too our poet invited even children to be present on such rehearsals, and at certain

points would watch their emotions. Hence too, in his character of manager, he taught his actors to study nature. An actress, apt to speak freely, told him, "You torment us all; but you never speak to my husband." This man, originally a candle-snuffer, was a perfect child of nature, and acted the Thomas Diaforius, in "Le Malade Imaginaire." Molière replied, "I should be sorry to say a word to him; I should spoil his acting. Nature has provided him with better lessons to perform his parts than any which I could give him." We may imagine Shakespeare thus addressing his company, had the poet been also the manager.

A remarkable incident in the history of the genius of Molière is the frequent recurrence of the poet to the passion of jealousy. The "jaundice in the lover's eye," he has painted with every tint of his imagination. "The green-eyed monster" takes all shapes, and is placed in every position. Solemn, or gay, or satirical, he sometimes appears in agony, but often seems to make its "trifles light as air," only ridiculous as a source of consolation. Was "Le Contemplateur" comic in his melancholy, or melancholy in his comic humour?

The truth is, that the poet himself had to pass through those painful stages which he has dramatised. The domestic life of Molière was itself very dramatic; it afforded Goldoni a comedy of five acts, to reveal the secrets of the family circle of Molière; and l'Abbate Chiari, an Italian novelist and playwright, has taken for a comic subject, "Molière the Jealous Husband."

The French, in their "petite morale" on conjugal fidelity, appear so tolerant as to leave little sympathy for the real sufferer. Why should they else have treated domestic jealousy as a foible for ridicule, rather than a subject for deep passion? Their tragic drama exhibits no Othello, nor their comedy a Kitely, or a "Suspicious Husband." Molière, while his own heart was the victim, conformed to the national taste, by often placing the object on its comic side. Domestic jealousy is a passion which admits of a great diversity of subjects, from the tragic or the pathetic, to the absurd and ludicrous. We have them all in Molière. Mo-

lière often was himself "Le Cocu Imaginaire;" he had been in the position of the guardian in "L'Ecole des Maris." Like Arnolphe, in "L'Ecole des Femmes," he had taken on himself to rear a young wife who played the same part, though with less innocence; and, like the "Misanthrope," where the scene between Alceste and Celimène is "une des plus fortes qui existent au théâtre," he was deeply entangled in the wily cruelties of scornful coquetry, and we know that at times he suffered in "the hell of lovers" the torments of his own "Jealous Prince."

When this poet cast his fate with a troop of comedians, as the manager, and whom he never would abandon, when at the height of his fortune, could he avoid accustoming himself to the relaxed habits of that gay and sorrowful race, who, "of imagination all compact," too often partake of the passions they inspire in the scene? The first actress, Madame Béjard, boasted that, with the exception of the poet, she had never dispensed her personal favours but to the aristocracy. The constancy of Molière was interrupted by another actress, Du Parc; beautiful but insensible, she only tormented the poet, and furnished him with some severe lessons for the coquetry of his Celimène, in "Le Misanthrope." The facility of the transition of the tender passion had more closely united the susceptible poet to Mademoiselle de Brie. But Madame Béjard, not content to be the chief actress, and to hold her partnership in "the properties," to retain her ancient authority over the poet, introduced, suddenly, a blushing daughter, some say a younger sister, who had hitherto resided at Avignon, and who she declared was the offspring of the count of Modena, by a secret marriage. Armande Béjard soon attracted the paternal attentions of the poet. She became the secret idol of his retired moments, while he fondly thought that he could mould a young mind, in its innocence, to his own sympathies. The mother and the daughter never agreed. Armande sought his protection; and one day rushing into his study, declared that she would marry her friend. The elder Béjard freely consented to avenge herself on De Brie. De Brie was indulgent, though "the little creature," she observed, was to be yoked to one old enough to be her father. Un-

der the same roof were now heard the voices of the three females, and Molière meditating scenes of feminine jealousies.

Molière was fascinated by his youthful wife; her lighter follies charmed: two years riveted the connubial chains. Molière was a husband who was always a lover. The actor on the stage was the very man he personated. Mademoiselle Molière, as she was called by the public, was the Lucile in "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme." With what a fervour the poet feels her neglect! with what eagerness he defends her from the animadversions of the friend who would have dissolved the spell!

The poet was doomed to endure more poignant sorrows than slights. Mademoiselle had the art of persuading Molière that he was only his own "cocu imaginaire;" but these domestic embarrassments multiplied. Mademoiselle, reckless of the distinguished name she bore, while she gratified her personal vanity by a lavish expenditure, practised that artful coquetry which attracted a crowd of loungers. Molière found no repose in his own house, and retreated to a country-house, where, however, his restless jealousy often drove him back to scenes which he trembled to witness. At length came the last argument of outraged matrimony—he threatened confinement. To prevent a public rupture, Molière consented to live under the same roof, and only to meet at the theatre. Weak only in love, however divided from his wife, Molière remained her perpetual lover. He said, in confidence, "I am born with every disposition to tenderness. When I married, she was too young to betray any evil inclinations. My studies were devoted to her, but I soon discovered her indifference. I ascribed it to her temper; her foolish passion for Count Guiche made too much noise to leave me even this apparent tranquillity. I resolved to live with her as an honourable man, whose reputation does not depend on the bad conduct of his wife. My kindness has not changed her, but my compassion has increased. Those who have not experienced these delicate emotions have never truly loved. In her absence, her image is before me; in her presence, I am deprived of all reflection; I have no longer eyes for her

defects; I only view her amiable. Is not this the last extreme of folly? And are you not surprised that I, reasoning as I do, am only sensible of the weakness which I cannot throw off?"

Few men of genius have left in their writings deeper impressions of their personal feelings than Molière. With strong passions in a feeble frame, he had duped his imagination that, like another Pygmalion, he would create a woman by his own art. In silence and agony he tasted the bitter fruits of the disordered habits of the life of a comedian, a manager, and a poet. His income was splendid; but he himself was a stranger to dissipation. He was a domestic man, of a pensive and even melancholy temperament. Silent and reserved, unless in conversation with that more intimate circle whose literature aided his genius, or whose friendship consoled for his domestic disturbances, his habits were minutely methodical; the strictest order was observed throughout his establishment; the hours of dinner, of writing, of amusement, were allotted, and the slightest derangement in his own apartment excited a morbid irritability which would interrupt his studies for whole days.

Who, without this tale of Molière, could conjecture, that one skilled in the workings of our nature would have ventured on the perilous experiment of equalising sixteen years against forty—weighing roses against grey locks—to convert a wayward coquette, through her capricious womanhood, into an attached wife? Yet, although Mademoiselle could cherish no personal love for the intellectual being, and hastened to change the immortal name she bore for a more terrestrial man, she seems to have been impressed by a perfect conviction of his creative genius. When the Archbishop of Paris, in the pride of prelacy, refused the rites of sepulture to the corpse of Molière THE ACTOR, it was her voice which reminded the world of Molière THE POET, exclaiming—"Have they denied a grave to the man to whom Greece would have raised an altar!"

THE SENSIBILITY OF RACINE.

The Memoirs of the poet Racine, composed by his son, who was himself no contemptible poet, may be classed among those precious pieces of biography so delightful to the philosopher who studies human nature, and the literary man whose curiosity is interested in the history of his republic. Such works are rare, and rank in merit next to autobiographies. Such biographical sketches, like Boswell's of Johnson, contain what we often regret is wanting in the more regular life of a professed biographer. These desultory memoirs interest by their warmth, their more personal acquaintance with the hero, and abound with those minuter strokes which give so much life to the individual character.

The prominent feature in the character of Racine, was an excessive tenderness of feeling; his profound sensibility even to its infirmity, the tears which would cover his face, and the agony in his heart, was perhaps national. But if this sensibility produced at times the softest emotions, if it made him the poet of lovers, and even the poet of imagination, it also rendered him too feelingly alive to criticism, it embittered his days with a too keen perception of the domestic miseries which all men must alike undergo.

During a dramatic performance at St. Cyr, the youthful representative of Esther suddenly forgot her part; the agitated poet exclaimed, "Oh, mademoiselle, you are ruining my piece!" Terrified at this reprimand, the young actress wept; the poet flew to her, wiped away her tears, and with contagious sympathy shed tears himself. "I do not hesitate," says Louis Racine, "to relate such minute circumstances, because this facility of shedding tears shows the goodness of the heart, according to the observation of the ancients—

ἀγαθοὶ δ' ἁμὰ δάκρυά ἄνδρες."

This morbid state of feelings made his whole literary life uneasy; unjust criticism affected him as much as the most poignant, and there was nothing he dreaded more than that his son should become a writer of tragedies. "I will not dis-

simulate," he says, addressing his son, "that in the heat of composition we are not sometimes pleased with ourselves; but you may believe me, when the day after we look over our work, we are astonished not to find that excellence we admired in the evening; and when we reflect that even what we find good ought to be still better, and how distant we are still from perfection, we are discouraged and dissatisfied. Besides all this, although the approbation I have received has been very flattering, the least adverse criticism, even miserable as it might be, has always occasioned me more vexation than all the praise I have received could give me pleasure." And, again, he endeavours to impress on him that the favour he received from the world he owed not to his verses. "Do not imagine that they are my verses that attract all these kindnesses. Corneille composes verses a hundred times finer than mine, but no one regards him. His verses are only applauded from the mouths of the actors. I do not tire men of the world by reciting my works; I never allude to them; I endeavour to amuse them with matters which please them. My talent in their company is, not to make them feel that I have any genius, but to show them that they possess some themselves. When you observe the duke pass several hours with me, you would be surprised, were you present, that he frequently quits me without my having uttered three words; but gradually I put him in a humour of chatting, and he leaves me more satisfied with himself than with me." When Rochefoucault said that Boileau and Racine had only one kind of genius, and could only talk about their own poetry, it is evident that the observation should not have extended to Racine, however it might to Boileau. It was Racine's excessive sensibility which made him the finest dramatic reciter. The celebrated actress Chammelay, the heroine of his tragedies, had no genius whatever for the stage, but she had beauty, voice, and memory. Racine taught her first to comprehend the verses she was going to recite, showed her the appropriate gesture, and gave her the variable tones, which he even sometimes noted down. His pupil, faithful to her lessons, though a mere actress of art, on the stage seemed inspired by passion; and as she, thus formed and fashioned, naturally

only played thus effectively in the drama of her preceptor, it was supposed that love for the poet inspired the actress.

When Racine read aloud he diffused his own enthusiasm; once with Boileau and Nicole, amid a literary circle, they talked of Sophocles, whom Racine greatly admired, but from whom he had never dared to borrow a tragic subject. Taking up a Greek Sophocles, and translating the Œdipus, the French poet became so deeply imbued with the Greek tragedian, that his auditors caught all the emotions of terror and pity. "I have seen," says one of those auditors, "our best pieces represented by our best actors, but never anything approached the agitation which then came over us; and to this distant day I have never lost the recollection of Racine, with the volume in his hand, full of emotion, and we all breathlessly pressing around him."

It was the poet's sensibility that urged him to make the most extraordinary sacrifice that ever poet made; he wished to get rid entirely of that poetical fame to which he owed everything, and which was at once his pleasure, his pride, and his property. His education had been a religious one, in the Port-Royal; but when Nicole, one of that illustrious confraternity, with undistinguishing fanaticism, had once asserted that all dramatic writers were public poisoners of souls, Racine, in the pride and strength of his genius, had eloquently repelled the denouncement. But now, having yet only half run his unrivalled course, he turned aside, relinquished its glory, repented of his success, and resolved to write no more tragedies. He determined to enter into the austere order of the Chartreux; but his confessor, more rational than his penitent, assured him that a character so feeling as his own, and so long accustomed to the world, could not endure that terrible solitude. He advised him to marry a woman of a serious turn, and that little domestic occupations would withdraw him from the passion he seemed most to dread, that of writing verses.

The marriage of Racine was an act of penance—neither love nor interest had any share in the union. His wife was a good sort of woman, but perhaps the most insensible of her sex; and the properest person in the world to mortify the

passion of literary glory, and the momentary exultation of literary vanity. It is scarcely credible, but most certainly true, since her own son relates the fact, that the wife of Racine had neither seen, acted, nor ever read, nor desired to read, the tragedies which had rendered her husband so celebrated throughout Europe; she had only learned some of their titles in conversation. She was as insensible to fortune as to fame. One day, when Racine returned from Versailles, with the princely gift from Louis XIV. of a purse of 1000 louis, he hastened to embrace his wife, and to show her the treasure. But she was full of trouble, for one of the children for two days had not studied! "We will talk of this another time," exclaimed the poet; "at present let us be happy." But she insisted he ought instantly to reprimand this child, and continued her complaints; while Boileau in astonishment paced to and fro, perhaps thinking of his Satire on Women, and exclaiming, "What insensibility! Is it possible, that a purse of 1000 louis is not worth a thought!" This stoical apathy did not arise in Madame Racine from the grandeur, but the littleness, of her mind. Her prayer-books and her children were the sole objects that interested this good woman. Racine's sensibility was not mitigated by his marriage; domestic sorrows weighed heavily on his spirits; when the illness of his children agitated him, he sometimes exclaimed, "Why did I expose myself to all this? Why was I persuaded not to be a Chartreux?" His letters to his children are those of a father and a friend; kind exhortations or pathetic reprimands; he enters into the most domestic detail, while he does not conceal from them the mediocrity of their fortune. "Had you known him in his family," said Louis Racine, "you would be more alive to his poetical character, you would then know why his verses are always so full of sentiment. He was never more pleased than when, permitted to be absent from the court, he could come among us to pass a few days. Even in the presence of strangers he dared to be a father, and used to join us in our sports. I well remember our processions in which my sisters were the clergy, I the rector, and the author of Athaliah, chanting with us, carried the cross."

At length this infirm sensibility abridged his days. He was

naturally of a melancholic temperament, apt to dwell on objects which occasion pain, rather than on those which exhilarate. Louis Racine observes that his character resembled Cicero's description of himself, more inclined to dread unfortunate events, than to hope for happy ones; *semper magis adversos rerum exitus metuens quam sperans secundos.* In the last incident of his life his extreme sensibility led him to imagine as present a misfortune which might never have occurred.

Madame de Maintenon, one day in conversation with the poet, alluded to the misery of the people. Racine observed it was the usual consequence of long wars; the subject was animating, and he entered into it with all that enthusiasm peculiar to himself. Madame de Maintenon was charmed with his eloquent effusion, and requested him to give her his observations in writing, assuring him they should not go out of her hand. She was reading his memoir when the king entered her apartment; he took it up, and after having looked over a few pages, he inquired with great quickness who was the author. She replied it was a secret; but the king was peremptory, and the author was named. The king asked with great dissatisfaction, "Is it because he writes the most perfect verses, that he thinks that he is able to become a statesman?"

Madame de Maintenon told the poet all that had passed, and declined to receive his visits for the present. Racine was shortly after attacked with violent fever. In the languor of recovery he addressed Madame de Maintenon to petition to have his pension freed from some new tax; and he added an apology for his presumption in suggesting the cause of the miseries of the people, with a humiliation that betrays the alarms that existed in his mind. The letter is too long to transcribe, but it is a singular instance how genius can degrade itself when it has placed all its felicity on the varying smiles of those we call the great. Well might his friend Boileau, who had nothing of his sensibility nor imagination, exclaim, with his good sense, of the court:—

"Quel séjour étranger, et pour vous et pour moi!"

Racine afterwards saw Madame de Maintenon walking in the

gardens of Versailles; she drew aside into a retired allée to meet him; she exhorted him to exert his patience and fortitude, and told him that all would end well. "No, madam," he replied, "never!" "Do you then doubt," she said, "either my heart, or my influence?" He replied, "I acknowledge your influence, and know your goodness to me; but I have an aunt who loves me in quite a different manner. That pious woman every day implores God to bestow on me disgrace, humiliation, and occasions for penitence, and she has more influence than you." As he said these words, the sound of a carriage was heard; "The king is coming!" said Madame de Maintenon, "hide yourself!"

To this last point of misery and degradation was this great genius reduced. Shortly after, he died, and was buried at the feet of his master in the chapel of the studious and religious society of Port-Royal.

The sacred dramas of "Esther" and "Athaliah" were among the later productions of Racine. The fate of "Athaliah," his masterpiece, was remarkable. The public imagined that it was a piece written only for children, as it was performed by the young scholars of St. Cyr, and received it so coldly that Racine was astonished and disgusted. He earnestly requested Boileau's opinion, who maintained it was his capital work. "I understand these things," said he, "and the public *y reviendra*." The prediction was a true one, but it was accomplished too late, long after the death of the author; it was never appreciated till it was publicly performed.

Boileau and Racine derived little or no profit from the booksellers. Boileau particularly, though fond of money, was so delicate on this point, that he gave all his works away. It was this that made him so bold in railing at those authors *qui mettent leur Apollon aux gages d'un libraire*, and he declared that he had only inserted these verses,

> "Je sai qu'un noble esprit peut sans honte et sans crime
> Tirer de son travail un tribut légitime,"

to console Racine, who had received some profits from the printing of his tragedies. Those profits were, however, inconsiderable; the truth is, the king remunerated the poets.

Racine's first Royal mark of favour was an order signed by Colbert for six hundred livres, *to give him the means of continuing his studies of the belles-lettres.* He received, by an account found among his papers, above forty thousand livres from the cassette of the king, by the hand of the first valet-de-chambre. Besides these gifts, Racine had a pension of four thousand livres, as historiographer, and another pension as a man of letters.

Which is the more honourable? to crouch for a salary brought by the hand of the first valet-de-chambre, or to exult in the tribute offered by the public to an author?

OF STERNE.

CERVANTES is immortal—Rabelais and STERNE have passed away to the curious.

These fraternal geniuses alike chose their subjects from their own times. Cervantes, with the innocent design of correcting a temporary folly of his countrymen, so that the very success of the design might have proved fatal to the work itself; for when he had cut off the heads of the hydra, an extinct monster might cease to interest the readers of other times, and other manners. But Cervantes, with judgment equal to his invention, and with a cast of genius made for all times, delighted his contemporaries and charms his posterity. He looked to the world and collected other follies than the Spanish ones, and to another age than the administration of the duke of Lerma; with more genuine pleasantry than any writer from the days of Lucian, not a solitary spot has soiled the purity of his page; while there is scarcely a subject in human nature for which we might not find some apposite illustration. His style, pure as his thoughts, is, however, a magic which ceases to work in all translations, and Cervantes is not Cervantes in English or in French; yet still he retains his popularity among all the nations of Eu-

rope; which is more than we can say even of our Shakespeare!

Rabelais and Sterne were not perhaps inferior in genius, and they were read with as much avidity and delight as the Spaniard. "Le docte Rabelais" had the learning which the Englishman wanted; while unhappily Sterne undertook to satirise false erudition, which requires a knowledge of the true. Though the "Papemanes," on whom Rabelais has exhausted his grotesque humour and his caustic satire, have not yet walked off the stage, we pay a heavy price in the grossness of his ribaldry and his tiresome balderdash for odd stories and flashes of witty humour. Rabelais hardly finds readers even in France, with the exception of a few literary antiquaries. The day has passed when a gay dissolute abbé could obtain a rich abbey by getting Rabelais by heart, for the perpetual improvement of his patron—and Rabelais is now little more than a Rabelais by tradition.

In my youth the world doted on Sterne! Martin Sherlock ranks him among "the luminaries of the century." Forty years ago, young men, in their most facetious humours, never failed to find the archetype of society in the Shandy family—every good-natured soul was uncle Toby, every humourist was old Shandy, every child of nature was Corporal Trim! It may now be doubted whether Sterne's natural dispositions were the humorous or the pathetic: the pathetic has survived.

There is nothing of a more ambiguous nature than strong humour, and Sterne found it to be so; and latterly, in despair, he asserted that "the taste for humour is the gift of heaven!" I have frequently observed how humour, like the taste for olives, is even repugnant to some palates, and have witnessed the epicure of humour lose it all by discovering how some have utterly rejected his favourite relish! Even men of wit may not taste humour! The celebrated Dr. Cheyne, who was not himself deficient in originality of thinking with great learning and knowledge, once entrusted to a friend a remarkable literary confession. Dr. Cheyne assured him that "he could not read 'Don Quixote' with any pleasure, nor had any taste for Hudibras or Gulliver;

and that what we call *wit* and *humour* in these authors, he considered as false ornaments, and never to be found in those compositions of the ancients which we most admire and esteem."* Cheyne seems to have held Aristophanes and Lucian monstrously cheap! The ancients, indeed, appear not to have possessed that comic quality that we understand as *humour*, nor can I discover a word which exactly corresponds with our term *humour* in any language, ancient or modern. Cervantes excels in that sly satire which hides itself under the cloak of gravity, but this is not the sort of humour which so beautifully plays about the delicacy of Addison's page; and both are distinct from the broader and strong humour of Sterne.

The result of Dr. Cheyne's honest confession was experienced by Sterne, for while more than half of the three kingdoms were convulsed with laughter at his humour, the other part were obdurately dull to it. Take, for instance, two very opposite effects produced by Tristram Shandy on a man of strong original humour himself, and a wit who had more delicacy and sarcasm than force and originality. The Rev. Philip Skelton declared that "after reading Tristram Shandy, he could not for two or three days attend seriously to his devotion, it filled him with so many ludicrous ideas." But Horace Walpole, who found his "Sentimental Journey" very pleasing, declares that of "his tiresome 'Tristram Shandy' he could never get through three volumes."

The literary life of Sterne was a short one: it was a blaze of existence, and it turned his head. With his personal life we are only acquainted by tradition. Was the great sentimentalist himself unfeeling, dissolute, and utterly depraved? Some anecdotes which one of his companions† communicated to me, confirm Garrick's account preserved in

* This friend, it now appears, was Dr. King of Oxford, whose anecdotes have recently been published. This curious fact is given in a strange hodge-podge, enlitled "The Dreamer;" a remarkable instance where a writer of learning often conceives that to be humour, which to others is not even intelligible!

† Caleb Whitefoord, the wit, once famed for his invention of cross-readings, which appeared under the name of "Papirius Cursor."

Dr. Burney's collections, that "He was more dissolute in his conduct than his writings, and generally drove every female away by his ribaldry. He degenerated in London like an ill-transplanted shrub; the incense of the great spoiled his head, and their ragouts his stomach. He grew sickly and proud—an invalid in body and mind." Warburton declared that "he was an irrecoverable scoundrel." Authenticated facts are, however, wanting for a judicious summary of the real character of the founder of sentimental writing. An impenetrable mystery hangs over his family conduct; he has thrown many sweet domestic touches in his own memoirs and letters addressed to his daughter: but it would seem that he was often parted from his family. After he had earnestly solicited the return of his wife from France, though she did return, he was suffered to die in utter neglect.

His sermons have been observed to be characterised by an air of levity; he attempted this unusual manner. It was probably a caprice which induced him to introduce one of his sermons in "Tristram Shandy;" it was fixing a diamond in black velvet, and the contrast set off the brilliancy. But he seems then to have had no design of publishing his "Sermons." One day, in low spirits, complaining to Caleb Whitefoord of the state of his finances, Caleb asked him "if he had no sermons like the one in 'Tristram Shandy?'" But Sterne had no notion that "sermons" were saleable, for two preceding ones had passed unnoticed. "If you could hit on a striking title, take my word for it that they would go down." The next day Sterne made his appearance in raptures. "I have it!" he cried: "Dramatic Sermons by Yorick." With great difficulty he was persuaded to drop this allusion to the church and the playhouse!

We are told in the short addition to his own memoirs, that "he submitted to fate on the 18th day of March, 1768, at his lodgings in Bond-street." But it does not appear to have been noticed that Sterne died with neither friend nor relation by his side! a hired nurse was the sole companion of the man whose wit found admirers in every street, but whose heart, it would seem, could not draw one to his death-bed! We cannot say whether Sterne, who had long been dying,

had resolved to practice his own principle,—when he made the philosopher Shandy, who had a fine saying for everything, deliver his opinion on death—that "there is no terror, brother Toby, in its looks, but what it borrows from groans and convulsions—and the blowing of noses, and the wiping away of tears with the bottoms of curtains in a dying man's room. Strip it of these, what is it?" I find the moment of his death described in a singular book, the "Life of a Footman." I give it with all its particulars. "In the month of January, 1768, we set off for London. We stopped for some time at Almack's house in Pall-Mall. My master afterwards took Sir James Gray's house in Clifford-street, who was going ambassador to Spain. He now began house-keeping, hired a French cook, a house-maid, and kitchen-maid, and kept a great deal of the best company. About this time, Mr. Sterne, the celebrated author, was taken ill at the silk-bag shop in Old Bond-street. He was sometimes called 'Tristram Shandy,' and sometimes 'Yorick;' a very great favourite of the gentlemen's. One day my master had company to dinner who were speaking about him; the Duke of Roxburgh, the Earl of March, the Earl of Ossory, the Duke of Grafton, Mr. Garrick, Mr. Hume, and Mr. James. 'John,' said my master, 'go and inquire how Mr. Sterne is to-day.' I went, returned and said,—I went to Mr. Sterne's lodging; the mistress opened the door; I inquired how he did. She told me to go up to the nurse; I went into the room, and he was just a-dying. I waited ten minutes; but in five he said, 'Now it is come!' He put up his hand as if to stop a blow, and died in a minute. The gentlemen were all very sorry, and lamented him very much."*

Such is the simple narrative of the death of this wit!

* "Travels in various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, during a series of thirty years and upwards, by John Macdonald, a cadet of the family of Kippoch, in Invernesshire, who after the ruin of his family in 1765, was thrown, when a child, on the wide world, &c. Printed for the author, 1790."—He served a number of noblemen and gentlemen in the humble station of a footman. There is such an air of truth and sincerity throughout the work that I entertain no doubt of its genuineness.

Some letters and papers of Sterne are now before me which reveal a piece of secret history of our sentimentalist. The letters are addressed to a young lady of the name of de Fourmantel, whose ancestors were the Berangers de Fourmantel, who during the persecution of the French Protestants by Louis XIV. emigrated to this country; they were entitled to extensive possessions in St. Domingo, but were excluded by their Protestantism. The elder sister became a Catholic, and obtained the estates; the younger adopted the name of Beranger, and was a governess to the Countess of Bristol. The paper states that Catherine de Fourmantel formed an attachment to Sterne, and that it was the expectation of their friends that they would be united; but that on a visit Sterne became acquainted with a lady, whom he married in the space of one month, after having paid his addresses to Miss de Fourmantel for five years. The consequence was, the total derangement of intellect of this young lady. She was confined in a private mad-house. Sterne twice saw her there, and from observation on her state drew the "Maria" whom he has so pathetically described. The elder sister, at the instigation of the father of the communicator of these letters, came to England, and took charge of the unhappy Maria, who died at Paris. "For many years," says the writer of this statement, "my mother had the *handkerchief* Sterne alludes to." The anxious wish of Sterne was to have his letters returned to him. In this he failed; and such as they are, without date, either of time or place, they are now before me.

The billets-doux are unquestionably authentic, but the statement is inaccurate. I doubt whether the narrative be correct in stating that Sterne married after an acquaintance of one month; for he tells us in his Memoirs that he courted his wife for two years; he however married in 1741. The "Sermon of Elijah," which he presents to Miss de Fourmantel in one of these letters, was not published till 1747. Her disordered mind could not therefore have been occasioned by the *sudden* marriage of Sterne. A sentimental intercourse evidently existed between them. He perhaps sought in her sympathy consolation for his domestic infelicity; he communicates to her the minutest events of his early fame; and

these letters, which certainly seem very like love-letters, present a picture of his life in town in the full flower of his fame, eager with hope and flushed with success.

LETTER I.

"My dear Kitty,

"I beg you will accept of the inclosed sermon, which I do not make you a present of merely because it was wrote by myself, but because there is a beautiful character in it of a tender and compassionate mind in the picture given of Elijah. Read it, my dear Kitty, and believe me when I assure you that I see something of the same kind and gentle disposition in your heart which I have painted in the prophet's, which has attached me so much to you and your interests, that I shall live and die

"Your affectionate and faithful servant,

"Laurence Sterne.

"P. S.—If possibe I will see you this afternoon before I go to Mr. Fothergil's. Adieu, dear friend,—I had the pleasure to drink your health last night."

LETTER II.

"My dear Kitty,

"If this billet catches you in bed, you are a lazy sleepy little slut, and I am a giddy, foolish, unthinking fellow for keeping you so late up—but this Sabbath is a day of rest; at the same time that it is a day of sorrow, for I shall not see my dear creature to-day, unless you meet me at Taylor's half an hour after twelve; but in this do as you like. I have ordered Matthew to turn thief and steal you a quart of honey—what is honey to the sweetness of thee, who art sweeter than all the flowers it comes from! I love you to distraction, Kitty, and will love you on so to eternity—so adieu, and believe, what time will only prove me, that I am, Yours."

LETTER III.

"My dear Kitty,

"I have sent you a pot of sweetmeats and a pot of honey

—neither of them half so sweet as yourself—but don't be vain upon this—or presume to grow sour upon this character of sweetness I give you; for if you do I shall send you a pot of pickles (by way of contraries) to sweeten you up, and bring you to yourself again—whatever changes happen to you, believe me that I am unalterably yours, and according to your motto such a one, my dear Kitty,

"Qui ne changera pas qu'en mourant.

"L. S."

He came up to town in 1760, to publish the two first volumes of Shandy, of which the first edition had appeared at York the preceding year.

LETTER IV.

"*London, May* 8.

"My dear Kitty,

"I have arrived here safe and sound—except for the hole in my heart which you have made, like a dear enchanting slut as you are.—I shall take lodgings this morning in Piccadilly or the Haymarket, and before I send this letter will let you know where to direct a letter to me, which letter I shall wait for by the return of the post with great impatience.

"I have the greatest honours paid me and most civilities shown me that were ever known from the great; and am engaged already to ten noblemen and men of fashion to dine. Mr. Garrick pays me all and more honour than I could look for: I dined with him to-day—and he has prompted numbers of great people to carry me to dine with them—he has given me an order for the liberty of his boxes and of every part of his house for the whole season; and indeed leaves nothing undone that can do me either service or credit. He has undertaken the whole management of the booksellers, and will procure me a great price—but more of this in my next.

"And now, my dear girl, let me assure you of the truest friendship for you that ever man bore towards a woman—wherever I am my heart is warm towards you, and ever shall be, till it is cold for ever. I thank you for the kind proof you gave me of your desire to make my heart easy in ordering

yourself to be denied to you know who—while I am so miserable to be separated from my dear dear Kitty, it would have stabbed my soul to have thought such a fellow could have the liberty of coming near you.—I therefore take this proof of your love and good principles most kindly—and have as much faith and dependence upon you in it, as if I was at your elbow—would to God I was at this moment—for I am sitting solitary and alone in my bedchamber (ten o'clock at night after the play), and would give a guinea for a squeeze of your hand. I send my soul perpetually out to see what you are doing—wish I could convey my body with it—adieu, dear and kind girl.—Ever your kind friend and affectionate admirer.

"I go to the oratorio this night. My service to your mama."

LETTER V.

"My dear Kitty,

"Though I have but a moment's time to spare, I would not omit writing you an account of my good fortune; my lord Fauconberg has this day given me a hundred and sixty pounds a year, which I hold with all my preferment; so that all or the most part of my sorrows and tears are going to be wiped away.—I have but one obstacle to my happiness now left—and what that is you know as well as I.*

"I long most impatiently to see my dear Kitty. I had a purse of guineas given me yesterday by a bishop—all will do well in time.

"From morning to night my lodgings, which by the bye are the genteelest in town,† are full of the greatest company. —I dined these two days with two ladies of the bedchamber —then with Lord Rockingham, Lord Edgcumb, Lord Winchelsea, Lord Littleton, a bishop, &c. &c.

"I assure you, my dear Kitty, that Tristram is the fashion. Pray to God I may see my dearest girl soon and well.—Adieu.

"Your affectionate friend,

"L. Sterne."

* Can this allude to the death of his wife?—that very year he tells his daughter he had taken a house at York, "for your mother and yourself."

† They were the second house from St. Alban's Street, Pall-Mall.

HUME, ROBERTSON, AND BIRCH.

The rarest of literary characters is such a historian as Gibbon; but we know the price which he paid for his acquisitions—unbroken and undeviating studies. Wilkes, a mere wit, could only discover the drudgery of compilation in the profound philosopher and painter of men and of nations. A speculative turn of mind, delighting in generalising principles and aggregate views, is usually deficient in that closer knowledge, without which every step we take is on the fairy-ground of conjecture and theory, very apt to shift its unsubstantial scenes. The Researchers are like the inhabitants of a city who live among its ancient edifices, and are in the market-places and the streets; but the theorists, occupied by perspective views, with a more artist-like pencil may impose on us a general resemblance of things; but often shall we find in those shadowy outlines how the real objects are nearly, if not wholly lost—for much is given which is fanciful, and much omitted which is true.

Of our two popular historians, Hume and Robertson, alike in character but different in genius, it is much to be lamented that neither came to their tasks with the previous studies of half a life; and their speculative or theoretical histories are of so much the less value whenever they are deficient in that closer research which can be obtained only in one way; not the most agreeable to those literary adventurers, for such they are, however high they rank in the class of genius, who grasp at early celebrity, and depend more on themselves than on their researches.

In some curious letters to the literary antiquary Dr. Birch, Robertson acknowledges "my chief object is to *adorn*, as far as I am capable of adorning, the history of a period which deserves to be better known." He probably took his lesson from Voltaire, the reigning author of that day, and a great favourite with Robertson. Voltaire indeed tells us, that no writers, but those who have composed tragedies, can throw any interest into a history; that we must know to paint and excite the passions; and that a history, like a dramatic piece,

must have situation, intrigue, and catastrophe; an observation which, however true, at least shows that there can be but a moderate quantity of truth in such agreeable narratives. Robertson's notion of *adorning* history was the pleasing labour of genius,—it was to amplify into vastness, to colour into beauty, and to arrange the objects of his meditation with a secret artifice of disposition. Such a historian is a sculptor, who, though he display a correct semblance of nature, is not less solicitous to display the miracles of his art, and enlarges his figures to a colossal dimension. Such is theoretical history.

The theoretical historian communicates his own character to his history; and if, like Robertson, he be profound and politic, he detects the secret motives of his actors, unravels the webs of cabinet councils, explains projects that were unknown, and details stratagems which never took place. When we admire the fertile conceptions of the Queen Regent, of Elizabeth, and of Bothwell, we are often defrauding Robertson of whatever admiration may be due to such deep policy.

When Hume received from Dr. Birch Forbes's Manuscripts and Murdin's State-papers, in great haste he writes to his brother historian: "What I wrote you with regard to Mary, &c., was from the printed histories and papers. But I am now sorry to tell you that by Murdin's State-papers, the matter is put beyond all question. I got these papers during the holidays by Dr. Birch's means; and as soon as I read them *I ran to Millar*, and desired him very earnestly to stop the publication of your history, till I should write to you, and give you an opportunity of correcting a mistake so important; but he absolutely refused compliance. He said that your book was now finished; that the whole narrative of Mary's trial must be wrote over again; that it was uncertain whether the new narrative could be brought within the same compass with the old; that this change would require the cancelling a great many sheets; that there were scattered *passages through the volumes founded on your theory.*" What an interview was this of Andrew Millar and David Hume! truly the bibliopole shone to greater advantage than the *two theoretical historians!* And so the world had, and eagerly

received, what this critical bookseller declared "required the new printing (that is, the new writing) of a great part of the edition!"

When this successful history of Scotland invited Robertson to pursue this newly-discovered province of philosophical or theoretical history, he was long irresolute in his designs, and so unpractised in those researches he was desirous of attempting, that his admirers would have lost his popular productions, had not a fortunate introduction to Dr. Birch, whose life had been spent in historical pursuits, enabled the Scottish historian to open many a clasped book, and to drink of many a sealed fountain. Robertson was long undecided whether to write the history of Greece, of Leo X., that of William III. and Queen Anne, or that of Charles V., and perhaps many other subjects.

We have a curious letter of Lord Orford's, detailing the purport of a visit Robertson paid to him to inquire after materials for the reigns of William and Anne; he seemed to have little other knowledge than what he had taken upon trust. "I painted to him," says Lord Orford, "the difficulties and the want of materials—but the booksellers will out-argue me." Both the historian and "the booksellers" had resolved on another history; and Robertson looked upon it as a task which he wished to have set to him, and not a glorious toil long matured in his mind. But how did he come prepared to the very dissimilar subjects he proposed? When he resolved to write the history of Charles V., he confesses to Dr. Birch: "I never had *access to any copious libraries*, and do not pretend to *any extensive knowledge of authors;* but I have made a list of such as I thought most essential to the subject, and have put them down *as I found them mentioned in any book I happened to read.* Your erudition and knowledge of books is infinitely superior to mine, and I doubt not but you will be able to make such additions to my catalogue as may be of great use to me. I know very well, and to my sorrow, *how servilely historians copy from one another*, and how little is to be learned from reading many books; but at the same time, when one writes upon any particular period, it is both necessary and decent for him to consult every book relating to it upon

which he can lay his hands." This avowal proves that Robertson knew little of the history of Charles V. till he began the task; and he further confesses that "he had no knowledge of the Spanish or German," which, for the history of a Spanish monarch and a German emperor, was somewhat ominous of the nature of the projected history.

Yet Robertson, though he once thus acknowledged, as we see, that he "never had access to any copious libraries, and did not *pretend to any extensive knowledge of authors*," seems to have acquired from his friend, Dr. Birch, who was a genuine researcher in manuscripts as well as printed books, a taste even for bibliographical ostentation, as appears by that pompous and voluminous list of authors prefixed to his History of America; the most objectionable of his histories, being a perpetual apology for the Spanish Government, adapted to the meridian of the court of Madrid, rather than to the cause of humanity, of truth, and of philosophy. I understand, from good authority, that it would not be difficult to prove that our historian had barely examined them, and probably had never turned over half of that deceptive catalogue. Birch thought so, and was probably a little disturbed at the overwhelming success of our eloquent and penetrating historian, while his own historical labours, the most authentic materials of history, but not history itself, hardly repaid the printer. Birch's publications are either originals, that is, letters or state-papers; or they are narratives drawn from originals, for he never wrote but from manuscripts. They are the true *materia historica*.

Birch, however, must have enjoyed many a secret triumph over our popular historians, who had introduced their beautiful philosophical history into our literature; the dilemma in which they sometimes found themselves must have amused him. He has thrown out an oblique stroke at Robertson's "pomp of style, and fine eloquence," "which too often tend to disguise the real state of the facts." * When he received from Robertson the present of his "Charles V.," after the just tribute of his praise, he adds some regret that the historian had not been so fortunate as to have seen Burghley's

* See Curiosities of Literature, 11th edition, p 515.

State-papers, "published since Christmas," and a manuscript trial of Mary Queen of Scots, in Lord Royston's possession. Alas! such is the fate of *speculative history;* a Christmas may come, and overturn the elaborate castle in the air. Can we forbear a smile when we hear Robertson, who had projected a history of British America, of which we possess two chapters, when the rebellion and revolution broke out, congratulate himself that he had not made any further progress? "It is lucky that my American history was not finished before this event; how many plausible theories that I should have been entitled to form are contradicted by what has now happened!" A fair confession!

Let it not be for one moment imagined, that this article is designed to depreciate the genius of Hume and Robertson, who are the noblest of our modern authors, and exhibit a perfect idea of the literary character.

Forty-four years ago, I transcribed from their originals the correspondence of the historian with the literary antiquary. For the satisfaction of the reader, I here preserve these literary relics.

Letters between Dr. Birch and Dr. W. Robertson, relative to the Histories of Scotland and of Charles V.

TO DR. BIRCH.

"Reverend Sir,

"Though I have not the good fortune to be known to you personally, I am so happy as to be no stranger to your writings, to which I have been indebted for much useful instruction. And as I have heard from my friends Sir David Dalrymple and Mr. Davidson, that your disposition to oblige was equal to your knowledge, I now presume to write to you and to ask your assistance without any apology.

"I have been engaged for some time in writing the history of Scotland from the death of James V. to the accession of James VI. to the throne of England. My chief object is to adorn (as far as I am capable of adorning) the history of a period, which on account of the greatness of the events, and their close connection with the transactions in England deserves to be better known. But as elegance of composition,

even where a writer can attain that, is but a trivial merit without historical truth and accuracy, and as the prejudices and rage of factions, both religious and political, have rendered almost every fact, in the period which I have chosen, a matter of doubt or of controversy, I have therefore taken all the pains in my power to examine the evidence on both sides with exactness. You know how copious the *materia historica* in this period is. Besides all the common historians and printed collections of papers, I have consulted several manuscripts which are to be found in this country. I am persuaded that there are still many manuscripts worth my seeing to be met with in England, and for that reason I propose to pass some time in London this winter. I am impatient however to know what discoveries of this kind I may expect, and what are the treasures before me, and with regard to this I beg leave to consult you.

"I was afraid for some time that Dr. Forbes's Collections had been lost upon his death, but I am glad to find by your 'Memoirs' that they are in the possession of Mr. Yorke. I see likewise that the 'Dépêches de Beaumont' are in the hands of the same gentleman. But I have no opportunity of consulting your 'Memoirs' at present, and I cannot remember whether the 'Dépêches de Fenelon' be still preserved or not. I see that Carte has made a great use of them in a very busy period from 1563 to 1576. I know the strength of Carte's prejudices so well that I dare say many things may be found there that he could not see, or would not publish. May I beg the favour of you to let me know whether Fenelon's papers be yet extant and accessible, and to give me some general idea of what Dr. Forbes's Collections contain with regard to Scotland, and whether the papers they consist of are different from those published by Haynes, Anderson, &c. I am far from desiring that you should enter into any detail, that would be troublesome to you, but some short hint of the nature of these Collections would be extremely satisfying to my curiosity, and I shall esteem it a great obligation laid upon me.

"I have brought my work almost to a conclusion. If you would be so good as to suggest anything that you thought use-

ful for me to know or to examine into I shall receive your directions with great respect and gratitude.

"I am with sincere esteem,

"Rev^{d} Sir Y^{r} m. ob. & m. h. S^{r}

"Wm. Robertson.

"*Gladsmuir*, 19 *Sept.* 1757."

TO DR. BIRCH.

"Dear Sir,

"If I had not considered a letter of mere compliment as an impertinent interruption to one who is so busy as you commonly are, I would long before this have made my acknowledgments to you for the civilities which you was so good as to show me while I was in London. I had not only a proof of your obliging disposition but I reaped the good effects of it.

"The papers to which I got access by your means, especially those from Lord Royston, have rendered my work more perfect than it could have otherwise been. My history is now ready for publication, and I have desired Mr. Millar to send you a large-paper copy of it in my name, which I beg you may accept as a testimony of my regard and of my gratitude. He will likewise transmit to you another copy which I must entreat you to present to my Lord Royston, with such acknowledgments of his favours toward me as are proper for me to make. I have printed a short appendix of original papers. You will observe that there are several inaccuracies in the press work. Mr. Millar grew impatient to have the book published, so that it was impossible to send down the proofs to me. I hope, however, the papers will be abundantly intelligible. I published them only to confirm my own system, about particular facts, not to obtain the character of an antiquarian. If upon perusing the book you discover any inaccuracies, either with regard to style or facts, whether of great or of small importance I will esteem it a very great favour, if you'll be so good as to communicate them to me. I shall likewise be indebted to you, if you'll let me know what reception the book meets with among the literati of your ac-

quaintance. I hope you will be particularly pleased with the critical dissertation at the end, which is the production of a co-partnership between me and your friend Mr. Davidson. Both Sir D. Dalrymple and he offer compliments to you. If Dean Tucker be in town this winter, I beg you would offer my compliments to him.

"I am w. great regard D^r Sir
"Y^r m. obed^t & mst. o. ser^t
"WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

"*Edinburgh* 1 *Jan.* 1759.
"My address is, one of the ministers of Ed."

TO DR. BIRCH.

"DEAR SIR,

"I beg leave once more to have recourse to your good nature and to your love of literature, and to presume upon putting you to a piece of trouble. After considering several subjects for another history I have at last fixed upon the reign of Charles V. which contains the first establishment of the present political system of Europe. I have begun to labour seriously upon my task. One of the first things requisite was to form a catalogue of books which must be consulted. As I never had access to very copious libraries, I do not pretend to any extensive knowledge of authors, but I have made a list of such as I thought most essential to the subject, and have put them down just in the order which they occurred to me, or as I found them mentioned in any book I happened to read. I beg you would be so good as to look it over, and as your erudition and knowledge of books is infinitely superior to mine, I doubt not but you'll be able to make such additions to my catalogue as may be of great use to me. I know very well and to my sorrow, how servilely historians copy from one another, and how little is to be learned from reading many books, but at the same time when one writes upon any particular period it is both necessary and decent for him to consult every book relating to it, upon which he can lay his hands. I am sufficiently master of French and Italian; but have no knowledge of the Spanish or German

tongues. I flatter myself that I shall not suffer much by this, as the two former languages together with the Latin, will supply me with books in abundance. Mr. Walpole informed me some time ago that in the catalogue of Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, there is a volume of papers relating to Charles V., it is No. 295. I do not expect much from it, but it would be extremely obliging if you would take the trouble of looking into it and of informing me in general what it contains. In the catalogue I have enclosed, this mark × is prefixed to all the books which I can get in this country; if you yourself, or any friend, with whom you can use freedom, have any of the other books in my list, and will be so good as to send them to Mr. Millar, he will forward them to me, and I shall receive them with great gratitude and return them with much punctuality. I beg leave to offer compliments to all our common friends, and particularly to Dean Tucker, if he be in town this season. I wish it were in my power to confer any return for all the trouble you have taken in my behalf——

"*Edinburgh*, 13 *Dec.* 1759."

FROM DR. BIRCH.

TO THE REV. DR. ROBERTSON, AT EDINBURGH.

"Dear Sir, *London*, 3 *Jany*, 1760.

"Your letter of the 13 Decr. was particularly agreeable to me, as it acquainted me with your resolution to resume your historic pen, and to undertake a subject which, from its importance and extent, and your manner of treating it, will be highly acceptable to the public.

"I have perused your list of books to be consulted on this occasion; and after transcribing it have delivered it to Mr. Millar; and shall now make some additions to it.

"The new 'Histoire d'Allemagne' by father Barre, chancellor of the university of Paris, published a few years ago in several volumes in q°. is a work of very good credit, and to be perused by you; as is likewise the second edition of 'Abrégé chronologique de l'Histoire & du Droit public d'Allemagne' just printed at Paris, and formed upon the plan of president

Henault's 'Nouvel Abrégé chronologique de l'Histoire de France,' in which the reigns of Francis I. and Henry II. will be proper to be seen by you.

"The 'Memoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Cardinal Granvelle' by father Rosper Levesque a Benedictin monk which were printed at Paris in two vol^s. 12° in 1753 contain some particulars relating to Charles V. But this performance is much less curious than it might have been, considering that the author had the advantage of a vast collection, above a hundred volumes of the Cardinal's original papers, at Besançon. Among these are the papers of his eminence's father who was chancellor and minister to the Emperor Charles V.

"Bishop Burnet in the 'Summary of Affairs before the Restoration' prefixed to his 'History of his Own Time,' mentions a life of Frederick Elector Palatine who first reformed the Palatinate as curiously written by Hubert Thomas Leodius. This book though a very rare one, is in my study and shall be sent to you. You will find in it many facts relating to your Emperor. The manuscript was luckily saved when the library of Heydelberg was plundered and conveyed to the Vatican after the taking of that city in 1622 and it was printed in 1624 at Francfort in 4^to. The writer had been secretary and councellor to the elector.

"Another book which I shall transmit to you is a valuable collection of state papers made by Mons^r. Rivier and printed at Blois in 1665 in two vols f°. They relate to the reigns of Francis I., Henry II. and Francis II. of France. The indexes will direct you to such passages as concern the Emperor.

"As Mons^r. Amelot de la Houssaie who was extremely conversant in modern history has in the 1^st Tome of his 'Mémoires Historiques Politiques et Littéraires' from p. 156 to 193 treated of Charles V., I shall add that book to my parcel.

"Varillas's Life of Henry II. of France should be looked into, though that historian has not at present much reputation for exactness and veracity.

"Dr. Fiddes in his Life of Cardinal Wolsey, has frequent occasion to introduce the Emperor his contemporary, of which Bayle in his Dictionary gives us an express article and not a short one, for it consists of eight of his pages.

"Roger Ascham, Queen Elizabeth's preceptor, when he was secretary to S^r. Richard Morysin amb. from K. Edward VI. to the imperial court, wrote to a friend of his 'a report and discourse of the affairs and state of Germany and the Emperor Charles's court.' This was printed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; but the copies of that edition are now very rare. However this will be soon made public, being reprinted in an edition of all the author's English works now in the press.

"The 'Epîtres des Princes' translated from the Italian by Belleforest will probably supply you with some few things to your purpose.

Vol. 295 among the Harleian MSS. contains little remarkable except some letters from Henry VIII's amb^r. in Spain in 1518 of which you may see an abstract in the printed catalogue.

"In Dr. Hayne's 'Collection of State Papers in the Hatfield History' p. 56 is a long letter of the lord of the council of Henry VIII. in 1546 to his amb^r. with the Emperor."

TO DR. BIRCH.

Extract from a letter of Dr. Robertson, dated College of Edinburgh, Oct. 8, 1765.

"* * * I have met with many interruptions in carrying on my 'Charles V.,' partly from bad health, and partly from the avocations arising from performing the duties of my office. But I am now within sight of land. The historical part of the work is finished and I am busy with a preliminary book in which I propose to give a view of the progress in the state of society, laws, manners, and arts, from the irruption of the barbarous nations to the beginning of the sixteenth century. This is a laborious undertaking; but I flatter myself that I shall be able to finish it in a few months. I have kept the books you was so good as to send me, and shall return them carefully as soon as my work is done."

OF VOLUMINOUS WORKS INCOMPLETE BY THE DEATHS OF THE AUTHORS.

In those "Dances of Death" where every profession is shown as taken by surprise in the midst of their unfinished tasks, where the cook is viewed in flight oversetting his caldron of soup, and the physician, while inspecting his patient's urinal, is himself touched by the grim visitor, one more instance of poor mortality may be added in the writers of works designed to be pursued through a long series of volumes. The French have an appropriate designation for such works, which they call "*ouvrages de longue haleine*," and it has often happened that the *haleine* has closed before the work.

Works of literary history have been particularly subject to this mortifying check on intellectual enterprise, and human life has not yielded a sufficient portion for the communication of extensive acquirement! After years of reading and writing, the literary historian, who in his innumerable researches is critical as well as erudite, has still to arbitrate between conflicting opinions; to resolve on the doubtful, to clear up the obscure, and to grasp at remote researches:—but he dies, and leaves his favourite volumes little more than a project!

Feelingly the antiquary Hearne laments this general forgetfulness of the nature of all human concerns in the mind of the antiquary, who is so busied with other times and so interested for other persons than those about him. "It is the business of a good antiquary, as of a good man, to have mortality always before him."

A few illustrious scholars have indeed escaped the fate reserved for most of their brothers. A long life and the art of multiplying that life not only by an early attachment to study, but by that order and arrangement which shortens our researches, have sufficed for a Muratori. With such a student time was a great capital, which he knew to put out at compound interest; and this Varro of the Italians, who performed an infinite number of things in the circumscribed period of ordinary life, appears not to have felt any dread of leaving his voluminous labours unfinished, but rather of want-

ing one to begin. This literary Alexander thought he might want a world to conquer! Muratori was never perfectly happy unless employed in two large works at the same time, and so much dreaded the state of literary inaction, that he was incessantly importuning his friends to suggest to him objects worthy of his future composition. The flame kindled in his youth, burned clear in his old age; and it was in his senility that he produced the twelve quartos of his *Annali d'Italia* as an addition to his twenty-nine folios of his *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, and the six folios of the *Antiquitates Medii Ævi!* yet these vast edifices of history are not all which this illustrious Italian has raised for his father-land. Gibbon in his Miscellaneous Works has drawn an admirable character of Muratori.

But such a fortunate result has rarely accompanied the labours of the literary worthies of this order. Tiraboschi indeed lived to complete his great national history of Italian literature; but, unhappily for us, Warton, after feeling his way through the darker ages of our poetry, and just conducting us to a brighter region, in planning the map of the country of which he had only a Pisgah view, expires amid his volumes! Our poetical antiquary led us to the opening gates of the paradise of our poetry, when, alas! they closed on him and on us! The most precious portion of Warton's history is but the fragment of a fragment.

Life passes away in collecting materials—the marble lies in blocks—and sometimes a colonnade is erected, or even one whole side of a palace indicates the design of the architect. Count Mazzuchelli, early in life, formed a noble but too mighty a project, in which, however, he considerably advanced. This was a historical and critical account of the memoirs and the writings of Italian authors; he even commenced the publication in alphabetical order, but the six invaluable folios we possess, only contain the authors the initial letters of whose names are A and B! This great literary historian had finished for the press other volumes, which the torpor of his descendants has suffered to lie in a dormant state. Rich in acquisition, and judicious in his decisions, the days of the patriotic Mazzuchelli were freely given to the

most curious and elegant researches in his national literature; his correspondence is said to consist of forty volumes; with eight of literary memoirs, besides the lives of his literary contemporaries;—but Europe has been defrauded of the hidden treasures.

The history of Baillet's "Jugemens des Sçavans sur les Principaux Ouvrages des Auteurs," or Decisions of the Learned on the Learned, is a remarkable instance how little the calculations of writers of research serve to ascertain the period of their projected labour. Baillet passed his life in the midst of the great library of the literary family of the Lamoignons, and as an act of gratitude arranged a classified catalogue in thirty-two folio volumes; it indicated not only what any author had professedly composed on any subject, but also marked those passages relative to the subject which other writers had touched on. By means of this catalogue, the philosophical patron of Baillet at a single glance discovered the great results of human knowledge on any object of his inquiries. This catalogue, of equal novelty and curiosity, the learned came to study, and often transcribed its precious notices. Amid this world of books, the skill and labour of Baillet prompted him to collect the critical opinions of the learned, and from the experience he had acquired in the progress of his colossal catalogue, as a preliminary sketched one of the most magnificent plans of literary history. This instructive project has been preserved by Monnoye in his edition. It consists of six large divisions, with innumerable subdivisions. It is a map of the human mind, and presents a view of the magnitude and variety of literature, which few can conceive. The project was too vast for an individual; it now occupies seven quartos, yet it advanced no farther than the critics, translators, and poets, forming little more than the first, and a commencement of the second great division; to more important classes the laborious projector never reached!

Another literary history is the "Bibliothèque Françoise" of Goujet, left unfinished by his death. He had designed a classified history of French literature, but of its numerous classes he has only concluded that of the translators, and not finished the second he had commenced, of the poets. He lost

himself in the obscure times of French literature, and consumed sixteen years on his eighteen volumes!

A great enterprise of the BENEDICTINES, the "Histoire Littéraire de la France," now consists of twelve large quartos, which even its successive writers have only been able to carry down to the close of the twelfth century*!

DAVID CLEMENT, a bookseller and a book-lover, designed the most extensive bibliography which had ever appeared; this history of books is not a barren nomenclature, the particulars and dissertations are sometimes curious; but the diligent life of the author only allowed him to proceed as far as the letter H! The alphabetical order which some writers have adopted, has often proved a sad memento of human life! The last edition of our own "Biographia Britannica," feeble, imperfect, and inadequate as the writers were to the task the booksellers had chosen them to execute, remains still a monument which every literary Englishman may blush to see so hopelessly interrupted.

When LE GRAND D'AUSSY, whose *Fabliaux* are so well known, adopted, in the warmth of antiquarian imagination, the plan suggested by the Marquis de Paulmy, first sketched in the *Mélanges tirés d'une grande Bibliothèque*, of a picture of the domestic life of the French people from their earliest periods, the subject broke upon him like a vision; it had novelty, amusement, and curiosity; "*le sujet m'en parut neuf, riche et piquant.*" He revelled amid the scenes of their architecture, the interior decorations of their houses, their changeable dress, their games, and recreations; in a word, on all the parts which were most adapted to amuse the fancy. But when he came to compose the more detailed work, the fairy scene faded in the length, the repetition, and the never-ending labour and weariness; and the three volumes which we now possess, instead of sports, dresses, and architecture, exhibit only a very curious, but not always a very amusing, account of the food of the French nation.

No one has more fully poured out his vexation of spirit—he may excite a smile in those who have never experienced

* This work has been lately resumed.

this tail of books and manuscripts,—but he claims the sympathy of those who would discharge their public duties so faithfully to the public. I shall preserve a striking picture of these thousand task-works, coloured by the literary pangs of the voluminous author who is doomed never to finish his curious work:—

"Endowed with a courage at all proofs, with health which, till then, was unshaken, and which excess of labour has greatly changed, I devoted myself to write the lives of the learned of the sixteenth century. Renouncing all kinds of pleasure, working ten to twelve hours a-day, extracting, ceaselessly copying, after this sad life, I now wished to draw breath, turn over what I had amassed, and arrange it. I found myself possessed of many thousands of *bulletins*, of which the longest did not exceed many lines. At the sight of this frightful chaos, from which I was to form a regular history, I must confess that I shuddered: I felt myself for some time in a *stupor and depression of spirits*; and now actually that I have finished this work, *I cannot endure the recollection of that moment of alarm without a feeling of involuntary terror*. What a business is this, good God, of a compiler! In truth, it is too much condemned: it merits some regard. At length I regained courage: I returned to my researches: I have completed my plan, though every day I was forced to add, to correct, to *change my form as well as my ideas*: six times has my hand *recopied my work*: and however fatiguing this may be, it certainly is not that portion of my task which has cost me most."

The history of the "Bibliotheca Britannica" of the late Dr. Watt, may serve as a mortifying example of the length of labour and the brevity of life. To this gigantic work the patient zeal of the writer had devoted twenty years; he had just arrived at the point of publication, when death folded down his last page; the son, who, during the last four years, had toiled under the direction of his father, was chosen to occupy his place. The work was in the progress of publication, when the son also died; and strangers now reap the fruits of their combined labours.

One cannot forbear applying to this subject of voluminous

designs, which must be left unfinished, the forcible reflection of Johnson on the planting of trees: "There is a frightful interval between the seed and timber. He that calculates the growth of trees has the unwelcome remembrance of the shortness of life driven hard upon him. He knows that he is doing what will never benefit himself: and when he rejoices to see the stem arise, is disposed to repine that another shall cut it down."

OF DOMESTIC NOVELTIES AT FIRST CONDEMNED.

It is amusing enough to discover that things, now considered among the most useful and even agreeable acquisitions of domestic life, on their first introduction ran great risk of being rejected, by the ridicule or the invective which they encountered. The repulsive effect produced on mankind by the mere strangeness of a thing, which at length we find established among our indispensable conveniences, or by a practice which has now become one of our habits, must be ascribed sometimes to a proud perversity in our nature: sometimes to the crossing of our interests, and to that repugnance to alter what is known, for that which has not been sanctioned by our experience. This feeling has, however, within the latter half century, considerably abated: but it proves, as in higher matters, that some philosophical reflection is required to determine on the usefulness, or the practical ability, of every object which comes in the shape of novelty or innovation. Could we conceive that man had never discovered the practice of washing his hands, but cleansed them as animals do their paws, he would for certain have ridiculed and protested against the inventor of soap, and as tardily, as in other matters, have adopted the invention. A reader, unaccustomed to minute researches, might be surprised, had he laid before him the history of some of the most familiar domestic articles which, in their origin, incurred the ridicule of the wits, and had to pass

through no short ordeal of time in the strenuous opposition of the zealots against domestic novelties. The subject requires no grave investigation; we will, therefore, only notice a few of universal use. They will sufficiently demonstrate, that however obstinately man moves in "the march of intellect," he must be overtaken by that greatest of innovators—Time itself; and that, by his eager adoption of what he had once rejected, and by the universal use of what he once deemed unuseful, he will forget, or smile at the difficulties of a former generation, who were baffled in their attempts to do what we all are now doing.

Forks are an Italian invention; and in England were so perfect a novelty in the days of Queen Bess, that Fynes Moryson, in his curious "Itinerary," relating a bargain with the patrone of a vessel which was to convey him from Venice to Constantinople, stipulated to be fed at his table, and to have "his glass or cup to drink in peculiar to himself, with his knife, spoon, and *fork*." This thing was so strange, that he found it necessary to describe it. It is an instrument "to hold the meat while he cuts it; for they hold it ill-manners that one should touch the meat with his hands."* At the close of the sixteenth century were our ancestors eating as the Turkish noblesse at present do, with only the free use of their fingers, steadying their meat and conveying it to their mouths by their mere manual dexterity. They were, indeed, most indelicate in their habits, scattering on the table-cloth all their bones and parings. To purify their tables, the servant bore a long wooden "voiding knife," by which he scraped the fragments from the table into a basket, called "a voider." Beaumont and Fletcher describe the thing,

> "They sweep the table with a wooden dagger."

Fabling Paganism had probably raised into a deity the little man who first taught us, as Ben Jonson describes its excellence—

> "——— the laudable use of forks,
> To the sparing of napkins."

This personage is well known to have been that odd com-

* Moryson's Itinerary, part i. p. 208.

pound, Coryat the traveller, the perpetual but of the wits He positively claims this immortality. "I myself thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this FORKED *cutting of meat*, not only while I was in Italy, but also in Germany, and oftentimes in England since I came home." Here the use of forks was, however, long ridiculed; it was reprobated in Germany, where some uncleanly saints actually preached against the unnatural custom "as an insult on Providence, not to touch our meat with our fingers." It is a curious fact, that forks were long interdicted in the Congregation de St. Maur, and were only used after a protracted struggle between the old members, zealous for their traditions, and the young reformers, for their fingers.* The allusions to the use of the fork, which we find in all the dramatic writers through the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, show that it was still considered as a strange affectation and novelty. The fork does not appear to have been in general use before the Restoration! On the introduction of forks, there appears to have been some difficulty in the manner they were to be held and used. In "The Fox," Sir Politic Would-be, counselling Peregrine at Venice, observes—

> "——— Then you must learn the use
> And handling of your silver fork at meals."

Whatever this art may be, either we have yet to learn it, or there is more than one way in which it may be practised. D'Archenholtz, in his "Tableau de l'Angleterre," asserts that an Englishman may be discovered anywhere, if he be observed at table, because he places his fork upon the left side of his plate; a Frenchman, by using the fork alone without the knife; and a German, by planting it perpendicularly into his plate; and a Russian, by using it as a tooth-pick."

TOOTH-PICKS seem to have come in with forks, as younger brothers of the table, and seem to have been borrowed from the nice manners of the stately Venetians. This implement of cleanliness was, however, doomed to the same anathema, as the fantastical ornament of "the complete Signor," the

* I find this circumstance concerning forks mentioned in the "Dictionnaire de Trevoux."

Italianated Englishman. How would the writers, who caught "the manners as they rise," have been astonished that now no decorous person would be unaccompanied by what Massinger in contempt calls

"Thy case of tooth-picks and thy silver fork!"

Umbrellas, in my youth, were not ordinary things; few but the macaronis of the day, as the dandies were then called, would venture to display them. For a long while it was not usual for men to carry them without incurring the brand of effeminacy; and they were vulgarly considered as the characteristics of a person whom the mob then hugely disliked, viz., a mincing Frenchman. At first, a single umbrella seems to have been kept at a coffee-house for some extraordinary occasion—lent as a coach or chair in a heavy shower—but not commonly carried by the walkers. The "Female Tatler" advertises, "the young gentleman belonging to the custom-house who, in fear of rain, borrowed *the umbrella from Wilks' Coffee-house*, shall the next time be welcome to the maid's *pattens*." An umbrella carried by a man was obviously then considered as extreme effeminacy. As late as 1778, one John Macdonald, a footman, who has written his own life, informs us, that when he carried "a fine silk umbrella, which he had brought from Spain, he could not with any comfort to himself use it; the people calling out 'Frenchman! why don't you get a coach?'" The fact was, that the hackney-coachmen and the chairmen, joining with the true *esprit de corps*, were clamorous against this portentous rival. This footman, in 1778, gives us further information:—"At this time there were no umbrellas worn in London, except in noblemen's and gentlemen's houses, where there was a large one hung in the hall to hold over a lady or a gentleman, if it rained, between the door and their carriage." His sister was compelled to quit his arm one day, from the abuse he drew down on himself by his umbrella. But he adds, that "he persisted for three months, till they took no further notice of this novelty. Foreigners began to use theirs, and then the English. Now it is become a great trade in London." The state of our popula-

tion might now, in some degree, be ascertained by the number of umbrellas.

Coaches, on their first invention, offered a fruitful source of declamation, as an inordinate luxury, particularly among the ascetics of monkish Spain. The Spanish biographer of Don John of Austria, describing that golden age, the good old times, when they only used "carts drawn by oxen, riding in this manner to court," notices that it was found necessary to prohibit coaches by a royal proclamation; "to such a height was this *infernal vice* got, which has done so much injury to Castile." In this style nearly every domestic novelty has been attacked. The injury inflicted on Castile by the introduction of coaches could only have been felt by the purveyors of carts and oxen for a morning's ride. The same circumstances occurred in this country. When coaches began to be kept by the gentry, or were hired out, a powerful party found their "occupation gone!" Ladies would no longer ride on pillions behind their footmen, nor would take the air, where the air was purest, on the river. Judges and counsellors from their inns would no longer be conveyed by water to Westminster Hall, or jog on with all their gravity on a poor palfrey. Considerable bodies of men were thrown out of their habitual employments, the watermen, the hackneymen, and the saddlers. Families were now jolted, in a heavy wooden machine, into splendour and ruin. The disturbance and opposition these coaches created we should hardly now have known, had not Taylor, the water poet and man, sent down to us an invective against coaches, in 1629, dedicated to all who are grieved with "the world running on wheels."

Taylor, a humorist and satirist, as well as waterman, conveys some information in this rare tract of the period when coaches began to be more generally used—"Within our memories our nobility and gentry could ride well mounted, and sometimes walk on foot gallantly attended with fourscore brave fellows in blue coats, which was a glory to our nation far greater than forty of these leathern timbrels. Then the name of a *coach* was heathen Greek. Whoever saw but upon extraordinary occasions, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Francis Drake ride in a coach? They made small use of coaches;

there were but few in those times, and they were deadly foes to sloth and effeminacy. It is in the memory of many, when in the whole kingdom there was not one! It is a doubtful question whether the devil brought *tobacco* into England in *a coach*, for both appeared at the same time." It appears that families, for the sake of their exterior show, miserably contracted their domestic establishment; for Taylor, the water-poet, complains that when they used formerly to keep from ten to a hundred proper serving-men, they now made the best shift, and for the sake of their coach and horses had only "a butterfly page, a trotting footman, and a stiff-drinking coachman, a cook, a clerk, a steward, and a butler, which hath forced an army of tall fellows to the gate-houses," or prisons. Of one of the evil effects of this new fashion of coach-riding, this satirist of the town wittily observes, that as soon as a man was knighted, his lady was lamed for ever, and could not on any account be seen but in a coach. As hitherto our females had been accustomed to robust exercise, on foot or on horseback, they were now forced to substitute a domestic artificial exercise in sawing billets, swinging, or rolling the great roller in the alleys of their garden. In the change of this new fashion they found out the inconvenience of a sedentary life passed in their coaches.

Even at this early period of the introduction of coaches, they were not only costly in the ornaments,—in velvets, damasks, taffetas, silver and gold lace, fringes of all sorts, but their greatest pains were in matching their coach-horses. "They must be all of a colour, longitude, latitude, cressitude, height, length, thickness, breadth—(I muse they do not weigh them in a pair of balances); and when once matched with a great deal of care, if one of them chance to die, then is the coach maimed till a meet mate be found, whose corresponding may be as equivalent to the surviving palfrey, in all respects, as like a broom to a besom, barm to yeast, or codlings to boiled apples." This is good natural humour. He proceeds—"They use more diligence in matching their coach-horses than in the marriage of their sons and daughters." A great fashion, in its novelty, is often extravagant; true elegance and utility are never at first combined; good sense and

experience correct its caprices. They appear to have exhausted more cost and curiosity in their equipages, on their first introduction, than since they have become objects of ordinary use. Notwithstanding this humorous invective on the calamity of coaches, and that "house-keeping never decayed till coaches came into England; and that a ten-pound rent now was scarce twenty shillings then, till the witchcraft of the coach quickly mounted the price of all things." The water-poet, were he now living, might have acknowledged, that if, in the changes of time, some trades disappear, other trades rise up, and in an exchange of modes of industry the nation loses nothing. The hands which, like Taylor's, rowed boats, came to drive coaches. These complainers on all novelties, unawares always answer themselves. Our satirist affords us a most prosperous view of the condition of "this new trade of coachmakers, as the gainfullest about the town. They are apparelled in satins and velvets, are masters of the parish, vestrymen, and fare like the Emperor Heliogabalus and Sardanapalus,—seldom without their mackeroones, Parmisants, (macaroni, with Parmesan cheese, I suppose,) jellies and kickshaws, with baked swans, pastries hot or cold, red-deer pies, which they have from their debtors, worships in the country!" Such was the sudden luxurious state of our first great coach-makers!—to the deadly mortification of all watermen, hackneymen, and other conveyancers of our loungers, thrown out of employ!

Tobacco.—It was thought, at the time of its introduction, that the nation would be ruined by the use of tobacco. Like all novel tastes, the newly-imported leaf maddened all ranks among us. "The money spent in smoke is unknown," said a writer of that day, lamenting over this "new trade of tobacco, in which he feared that there were more than seven thousand tobacco houses." James the First, in his memorable "Counter-blast to Tobacco," only echoed from the throne the popular cry; but the blast was too weak against the smoke, and vainly his paternal majesty attempted to terrify his liege children that "they were making a sooty kitchen in their inward parts, soiling and infecting them with an unctuous kind of soot, as hath been found in some great tobacco eaters, that

after their death were opened." The information was perhaps a pious fraud. This tract, which has incurred so much ridicule, was, in truth, a meritorious effort to allay the extravagance of the moment. But such popular excesses end themselves; and the royal author might have left the subject to the town-satirists of the day, who found the theme inexhaustible for ridicule or invective.

Coal.—The established use of our ordinary fuel, coal, may be ascribed to the scarcity of wood in the environs of the metropolis. Its recommendation was its cheapness, however it destroys everything about us. It has formed an artificial atmosphere which envelopes the great capital, and it is acknowledged that a purer air has often proved fatal to him who, from early life, has only breathed in sulphur and smoke. Charles Fox once said to a friend, "I cannot live in the country; my constitution is not strong enough." Evelyn poured out a famous invective against "London smoke." "Imagine," he cries, "a solid tentorium or canopy over London, what a mass of smoke would then stick to it! This fuliginous crust now comes down every night on the streets, on our houses, the waters, and is taken into our bodies. On the water it leaves a thin web or pellicle of dust dancing upon the surface of it, as those who bathe in the Thames discern, and bring home on their bodies." Evelyn has detailed the gradual destruction it effects on every article of ornament and price; and "he heard in France, that those parts lying south-west of England, complain of being infected with smoke from our coasts, which injured their vines in flower." I have myself observed at Paris, that the books exposed to sale on stalls, however old they might be, retained their freshness, and were in no instance like our own, corroded and blackened, which our coal-smoke never fails to produce. There was a proclamation, so far back as Edward the First, forbidding the use of sea-coal in the suburbs, on a complaint of the nobility and gentry, that they could not go to London on account of the noisome smell and thick air. About 1550, Hollingshed foresaw the general use of sea-coal from the neglect of cultivating timber. Coal fires have now been in general use for three centuries. In the country they persevered in using

wood and peat. Those who were accustomed to this sweeter smell, declared that they always knew a Londoner, by the smell of his clothes, to have come from coal fires. It must be acknowledged that our custom of using coal for our fuel has prevailed over good reasons why we ought not to have preferred it. But man accommodates himself even to an offensive thing, whenever his interest predominates.

Were we to carry on a speculation of this nature into graver topics, we should have a copious chapter to write of the opposition to new discoveries. Medical history supplies no unimportant number. On the improvements in anatomy by Malpighi and his followers, the senior professors of the university of Bononia were inflamed to such a pitch, that they attempted to insert an additional clause in the solemn oath taken by the graduates, to the effect that they would not permit the principles and conclusions of Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Galen, which had been approved of so many ages, to be overturned by any person. In phlebotomy we have a curious instance. In Spain, to the sixteenth century, they maintained that when the pain was on the one side they ought to bleed on the other. A great physician insisted on a contrary practice; a civil war of opinion divided Spain; at length they had recourse to courts of law; the novelists were condemned; they appealed to the emperor, Charles the Fifth; he was on the point of confirming the decree of the court, when the Duke of Savoy died of a pleurisy, having been legitimately bled. This puzzled the emperor, who did not venture on a decision.

The introduction of antimony and the jesuits' bark also provoked legislative interference; decrees and ordinances were issued, and a civil war raged among the medical faculty, of which Guy Patin is the copious historian. Vesalius was incessantly persecuted by the public prejudices against dissection; Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood led to so protracted a controversy, that the great discovery was hardly admitted even in the latter days of the old man; Lady Wortley Montague's introduction of the practice of inoculation met the same obstinate resistance as, more recently, that of vaccination startled the people. Thus objects, of the highest importance to mankind, on their first appearance are

slighted and contemned. Posterity smiles at the ineptitude of the preceding age, while it becomes familiar with those objects which that age has so eagerly rejected. Time is a tardy patron of true knowledge.

A nobler theme is connected with the principle we have here but touched on—the gradual changes in public opinion —the utter annihilation of false notions, like those of witchcraft, astrology, spectres, and many other superstitions of no remote date, the hideous progeny of imposture got on ignorance, and audacity on fear. But one impostor reigns paramount, the plausible opposition to novel doctrines which may be subversive of some ancient ones; doctrines which probably shall one day be as generally established as at present they are utterly decried, and which the interests of corporate bodies oppose with all their cumbrous machinery; but artificial machinery becomes perplexed in its movements when worn out by the friction of ages.

DOMESTICITY; OR, A DISSERTATION ON SERVANTS.

The characteristics of servants have been usually known by the broad caricatures of the satirists of every age, and chiefly by the most popular—the writers of comedy. According to these exhibitions, we must infer that the vices of the menial are necessarily inherent to his condition, and consequently that this vast multitude in society remain ever in an irrecoverably ungovernable state. We discover only the cunning depredator of the household; the tip-toe spy, at all corners—all ear, all eye: the parasitical knave—the flatterer of the follies, and even the eager participator of the crimes, of his superior. The morality of servants has not been improved by the wonderful revelations of Swift's "Directions," where the irony is too refined, while it plainly inculcates the practice. This celebrated tract, designed for the instruction of the masters, is more frequently thumbed in the kitchen, as a manual for the profligate domestic. Servants have acknow-

ledged, that some of their base doings have been suggested to them by their renowned satirist.

Bentham imagined, that were all the methods employed by thieves and rogues described and collected together, such a compilation of their artifices and villanies would serve to put us on our guard. The theorist of legislation seems often to forget the metaphysical state of man. With the vitiated mind, that latent sympathy of evil which might never have been called forth but by the occasion, has often evinced how too close an inspection of crime may grow into criminality itself. Hence it is, that when some monstrous and unusual crime has been revealed to the public, it rarely passes without a sad repetition. A link in the chain of the intellect is struck, and a crime is perpetrated which else had not occurred.

Listen to the counsels which one of the livery gives a brother, more stupid but more innocent than himself. I take the passage from that extraordinary Spanish comedy, in twenty-five acts, the "Spanish Bawd." It was no doubt designed to expose the arts and selfishness of the domestic, yet we should regret that the "Spanish Bawd" was as generally read by servants as Swift's "Directions."

"Serve not your master with this foolish loyalty and ignorant honesty, thinking to find firmness on a false foundation, as most of these masters now-a-days are. Gain friends, which is a during and lasting commodity; live not on hopes, relying on the vain promises of masters. The masters love more themselves than their servants, nor do they amiss; and the like love ought servants to bear to themselves. Liberality was lost long ago—rewards are grown out of date. Every one is now for himself, and makes the best he can of his servant's service, serving his turn, and therefore they ought to do the same, for they are less in substance. Thy master is one who befools his servants, and wears them out to the very stumps, looking for much service at their hands. Thy master cannot be thy friend, such difference is there of estate and condition between you two."

This passage, written two centuries ago, would find an echo of its sentiments in many a modern domestic. These notions are sacred traditions among the livery. We may trace them

from Terence and Plautus, as well as Swift and Mandeville. Our latter great cynic has left a frightful picture of the state of the domestics, when it seems "they had experienced professors among them, who could instruct the graduates in iniquity seven hundred illiberal arts how to cheat, impose upon, and find out the blind side of their masters." The footmen, in Mandeville's day, had entered into a society together, and made laws to regulate their wages, and not to carry burdens above two or three pounds weight, and a common fund was provided to maintain any suit at law against any rebellious master. This seems to be a confederacy which is by no means dissolved.

Lord Chesterfield advises his son not to allow his upper man to doff his livery, though this valet was to attend his person, when the toilette was a serious avocation requiring a more delicate hand and a nicer person than he who was to walk before his chair, or climb behind his coach. This searching genius of philosophy and *les petites mœurs* solemnly warned that if ever this man were to cast off the badge of his order, he never would resume it. About this period the masters were menaced by a sort of servile war. The famous farce of "High Life below Stairs" exposed with great happiness the impudence and the delinquencies of the parti-coloured clans. It roused them into the most barefaced opposition; and as ever happens to the few who press unjust claims on the many, in the result worked the reform they so greatly dreaded. One of the grievances in society was then an anomalous custom, for it was only practised in our country, of a guest being highly taxed in dining with a family whose establishment admitted of a numerous train. Watchful of the departure of the guest, this victim had to pass along a line of domestics, arranged in the hall, each man presenting the visitor with some separate article, of hat, gloves, coat and cane, claiming their "vails." It would not have been safe to refuse even those who, with nothing to present, still held out the hand, for their attentions to the diner-out.

When a slave was deemed not a person, but a thing marketable and transferable, the single principle judged sufficient to regulate the mutual conduct of the master and the domestic

was, to command and to obey. It seems still the sole stipulation exacted by the haughty from the menial. But this feudal principle, unalleviated by the just sympathies of domesticity, deprives authority of its grace, and service of its zeal. To be served well, we should be loved a little: the command of an excellent master is even grateful, for the good servant delights to be useful. The slave repines, and such is the domestic destitute of any personal attachment for his master. Whoever was mindful of the interests of him whose beneficence is only a sacrifice to his pomp? The master dresses and wages highly his pampered train; but this is the calculated cost of state-liveries, of men measured by a standard, for a Hercules in the hall, or an Adonis for the drawing-room: but at those times when the domestic ceases to be an object in the public eye, he sinks into an object of sordid economy, or of merciless caprice. His personal feelings are recklessly neglected. He sleeps where there is neither light nor air; he is driven when he is already exhausted: he begins the work of midnight, and is confined for hours with men like himself, who fret, repine, and curse. They have their tales to compare together; their unhallowed secrets to disclose. The masters and mistresses pass by them in review, and little deem they how oft the malignant glance or the malicious whisper follow their airy steps. To shorten such tedious hours, the servants familiarise themselves with every vicious indulgence, for even the occupation of such domestics is little more than a dissolute idleness. A cell in Newgate does not always contain more corruptors than a herd of servants congregated in our winter halls. It is to be lamented that the modes of fashionable life demand the most terrible sacrifices of the health, the happiness, and the morals of servants. Whoever perceives that he is held in no esteem, stands degraded in his own thoughts. The heart of the simple throbs with this emotion: but it hardens the villain who would rejoice to avenge himself: it makes the artful only the more cunning; it extorts from the sullen a cold unwilling obedience, and it stings even the good-tempered into insolence.

South, as great a wit as a preacher, has separated, by an awful interval, the superior and the domestic. "A servant

dwells remote from all knowledge of his lord's purposes; he lives as a kind of a foreigner under the same roof; a domestic, yet a foreigner too." This exhibits a picture of feudal manners. But the progress of society in modern Europe has since passed through a mighty evolution. In the visible change of habits, of feelings, of social life, the humble domestic has approximated to, and communicated more frequently even with "his lord." The domestic is not now always a stranger to "his lord's purposes," but often their faithful actor —their confidential counsellor—the mirror in which his lordship contemplates on his wishes personified.

This reflection, indeed, would have violated the dignity of the noble friend of Swift, Lord Orrery. His lordship censures the laughter in "Rabelais' easy chair" for having directed such intense attention to affairs solely relating to servants. "Let him jest with dignity, and let him be ironical upon *useful* subjects, leaving *poor slaves* to eat their porridge, or drink their small beer, in such vessels as they shall think proper." This lordly criticism has drawn down the lightning of Sir Walter Scott:—"The noble lord's feelings of dignity deemed nothing worthy of attention that was unconnected with the highest orders of society." Such, in truth, was too long the vicious principle of those monopolists of personal distinction, the mere men of elevated rank.

Metropolitan servants, trained in depravity, are incapacitated to comprehend how far the personal interests of servants are folded up with the interests of the house they inhabit. They are unconscious that they have any share in the welfare of the superior, save in the degree that the prosperity of the master contributes to the base and momentary purposes of the servant. But in small communities we perceive how the affections of the master and the domestic may take root.

Look in an ancient retired family, whose servants often have been born under the roof they inhabit, and where the son is serving where the father still serves, and sometimes call the sacred spot of their cradle and their grave by the proud and endearing term of "our house." We discover this in whole countries where luxury has not removed the classes of society at too wide distances from each other, to deaden their sympa-

thies. We behold this in agrestic Switzerland, among its villages and its pastures; in France, among its distant provinces; in Italy, in some of its decayed cities; and in Germany, where simple manners and strong affections mark the inhabitants of certain localities. Holland long preserved its primitive customs; and there the love of order promotes subordination, though its free institutions have softened the distinctions in the ranks of life, and there we find a remarkable evidence of domesticity. It is not unusual in Holland for servants to call their masters uncle, their mistresses aunt, and the children of the family their cousins. These domestics, participating in the comforts of the family, become naturalised and domiciliated; and their extraordinary relatives are often adopted by the heart. A heroic effort of these domestics has been recorded; it occurred at the burning of the theatre at Amsterdam, where many rushed into the flames, and nobly perished in the attempt to save their endeared families.

It is in limited communities that the domestic virtues are most intense; all concentrating themselves in their private circles, in such localities there is no public,—no public which extorts so many sacrifices from the individual. Insular situations are usually remarkable for the warm attachment and devoted fidelity of the domestic, and the personal regard of families for their servants. This genuine domesticity is strikingly displayed in the island of Ragusa, on the coast of Dalmatia; for there they provide for the happiness of the humble friends of the house. Boys, at an early age, are received into families, educated in writing, reading, and arithmetic. Some only quit their abode, in which they were almost born, when tempted by the stirring spirit of maritime enterprise. They form a race of men who are much sought after for servants; and the term applied to them of "Men of the Gulf," is a sure recommendation of character for unlimited trust and unwearying zeal.

The mode of providing for the future comforts of their maidens is a little incident in the history of benevolence, which we must regret is only practised in such limited communities. Malte-Brun, in his "Annales des Voyages," has painted a

scene of this nature, which may read like some romance of real life. The girls, after a service of ten years, on one great holiday, an epoch in their lives, receive the ample reward of their good conduct. On that happy day, the mistress and all the friends of the family prepare for the maiden a sort of dowry or marriage-portion. Every friend of the house sends some article; and the mistress notes down the gifts, that she may return the same on a similar occasion. The donations consist of silver, of gowns, of handkerchiefs, and other useful articles for a young woman. These tributes of friendship are placed beside a silver basin, which contains the annual wages of the servant; her relatives from the country come, accompanied by music, carrying baskets covered with ribbons and loaded with fruits, and other rural delicacies. They are received by the master himself, who invites them to the feast, where the company assemble, and particularly the ladies. All the presents are reviewed. The servant introduced, kneels to receive the benediction of her mistress, whose grateful task is then to deliver a solemn enumeration of her good qualities, concluding by announcing to the maiden, that having been brought up in the house, if it be her choice to remain, from henceforwards she shall be considered as one of the family. Tears of affection often fall during this beautiful scene of true domesticity, which terminates with a ball for the servants, and another for the superiors. The relatives of the maiden return homewards with their joyous musicians; and, if the maiden prefer her old domestic abode, she receives an increase of wages, and at a succeeding period of six years, another jubilee provides her second good fortune. Let me tell one more story of the influence of this passion of domesticity in the servant;—its merit equals its novelty. In that inglorious attack on Buenos Ayres, where our brave soldiers were disgraced by a recreant general, the negroes, slaves as they were, joined the inhabitants to expel their invaders. On this signal occasion, the city decreed a public expression of their gratitude to the negroes, in a sort of triumph, and at the same time awarded the freedom of eighty of their leaders. One of them having shown his claims to the boon, declared, that to obtain his freedom had all his days formed the proud object of his

wishes; his claim was indisputable; yet now, however, to the amazement of the judges, he refused his proffered freedom! The reason he alleged was a singular refinement of heartfelt sensibility:—"My kind mistress," said the negro, "once wealthy, has fallen into misfortunes in her infirm old age. I work to maintain her, and at intervals of leisure she leans on my arm to take the evening air. I will not be tempted to abandon her, and I renounce the hope of freedom that she may know she possesses a slave who never will quit her side."

Although I have been travelling out of Europe to furnish some striking illustrations of the powerful emotion of domesticity, it is not that we are without instances in the private history of families among ourselves. I have known more than one where the servant has chosen to live without wages, rather than quit the master or the mistress in their decayed fortunes; and another where the servant cheerfully worked to support her old lady to her last day.

Would we look on a very opposite mode of servitude, turn to the United States. No system of servitude was ever so preposterous. A crude notion of popular freedom in the equality of ranks abolished the very designation of "servant," substituting the fantastic term of "helps." If there be any meaning left in this barbarous neologism, their aid amounts to little; their engagements are made by the week, and they often quit their domicile without the slightest intimation.

Let none, in the plenitude of pride and egotism, imagine that they exist independent of the virtues of their domestics. The good conduct of the servant stamps a character on the master. In the sphere of domestic life they must frequently come in contact with them. On this subordinate class, how much the happiness and even the welfare of the master may rest! The gentle offices of servitude began in his cradle, and await him at all seasons and all spots, in pleasure or in peril. Feelingly observes Sir Walter Scott, "In a free country an individual's happiness is more immediately connected with the personal character of his valet, than with that of the monarch himself." Let the reflection not be deemed extravagant, if I venture to add, that the habitual obedience of a devoted servant is a more immediate source of

personal comfort than even the delightfulness of friendship and the tenderness of relatives,—for these are but periodical; but the unbidden zeal of the domestic, intimate with our habits, and patient of our waywardness, labours for us at all hours. It is those feet which hastens to us in our solitude; it is those hands which silently administer to our wants. At what period of life are even the great exempt from the gentle offices of servitude?

Faithful servants have never been commemorated by more heartfelt affection than by those whose pursuits require a perfect freedom from domestic cares. Persons of sedentary occupations and undisturbed habits, abstracted from the daily business of life, must yield unlimited trust to the honesty, while they want the hourly attentions and all the cheerful zeal, of the thoughtful domestic. The mutual affections of the master and the servant have often been exalted into a compartnership of feelings.

When Madame de Genlis heard that POPE had raised a monument not only to his father and to his mother, but also to the faithful servant who had nursed his earliest years. she was so suddenly struck by the fact, that she declared that "This monument of gratitude is the more remarkable for its singularity, as I know of no other instance." Our churchyards would have afforded her a vast number of tomb-stones erected by grateful masters to faithful servants *; and a closer intimacy with the domestic privacy of many public characters might have displayed the same splendid examples. The one which appears to have so strongly affected her may be found on the east end of the outside of the parish-church of Twickenham. The stone bears this inscription:—

To the memory of Mary Beach,
who died November 5, 1725, aged 78,
Alexander Pope,
whom she nursed in his infancy,
and constantly attended for thirty-eight years,
Erected this stone
In gratitude to a faithful Servant.

* Even our modern cemeteries perpetuate this feeling, and exhibit many grateful EPITAPHS on SERVANTS.

The original portrait of SHENSTONE was the votive gift of a master to his servant; for on its back, written by the poet's own hand, is the following dedication:—"This picture belongs to Mary Cutler, given her by her master, William Shenstone, January 1st, 1754, in acknowledgment of her native genius, her magnanimity, her tenderness, and her fidelity.—W. S." We might refer to many similar evidences of the domestic gratitude of such masters to old and attached servants. Some of these tributes may be familiar to most readers. The solemn author of the "Night Thoughts" inscribed an epitaph over the grave of his man-servant; the caustic GIFFORD poured forth an effusion to the memory of a female servant, fraught with a melancholy tenderness which his muse rarely indulged.

The most pathetic, we had nearly said and had said justly, the most sublime, development of this devotion of a master to his servant, is a letter addressed by that powerful genius MICHAEL ANGELO to his friend Vasari, on the death of Urbino, an old and beloved servant. Published only in the voluminous collection of the letters of Painters, by Bottari, it seems to have escaped general notice. We venture to translate it in despair. for we feel that we must weaken its masculine yet tender eloquence.

MICHAEL ANGELO TO VASARI.

"MY DEAR GEORGE,

"I can but write ill, yet shall not your letter remain without my saying something. You know how Urbino has died. Great was the grace of God when he bestowed on me this man, though now heavy be the grievance and infinite the grief. The grace was that when he lived he kept me living; and in dying he has taught me to die, not in sorrow and with regret, but with a fervent desire of death. Twenty and six years had he served me, and I found him a most rare and faithful man; and now that I had made him rich, and expected to lean on him as the staff and repose of my old age, he is taken from me, and no other hope remains than that of seeing him again in Paradise. A sign of God was this happy death to him; yet even more than this death, were his regrets in-

creased to leave me in this world the wretch of many anxieties, since the better half of myself has departed with him, and nothing is left for me than this loneliness of life."

Even the throne has not been too far removed from this sphere of humble humanity, for we discover in St. George's Chapel a mural monument erected by order of one of our late sovereigns as the memorial of a female servant of a favourite daughter. The inscription is a tribute of domestic affection in a royal bosom, where an attached servant became a cherished inmate.

King George III.
Caused to be interred near this place
The body of Mary Gascoigne,
Servant to the Princess Amelia ;
and this stone
to be inscribed in testimony of his grateful sense
of the faithful services and attachment
of an amiable young woman
to
his beloved Daughter.

This deep emotion for the tender offices of servitude is not peculiar to the refinement of our manners, or to modern Europe ; it is not the charity of Christianity alone which has hallowed this sensibility, and confessed this equality of affection, whicht he domestic may participate : monumental inscriptions, raised by grateful masters to the merits of their slaves, have been preserved in the great collections of Grævius and Gruter.

PRINTED LETTERS IN THE VERNACULAR IDIOM.

Printed Letters without any attention to the selection is so great a literary evil, that it has excited my curiosity to detect the first modern who obtruded such formless things on public attention. I conjectured that whoever he might be, he would be distinguished for his egotism and his knavery. My hypothetical criticism turned out to be correct. Nothing less than the audacity of the unblushing Pietro Aretino could

have adventured on this project; he claims the honour, and the critics do not deny it, of being the first who published Italian letters. Aretino had the hardihood to dedicate one volume of his letters to the King of England, another to the Duke of Florence; a third to Hercules of Este, a relative of Pope Julius Third,—evidently insinuating that his letters were worthy to be read by the royal and the noble.

Among these letters there is one addressed to Mary, Queen of England, on her resuscitation of the ancient faith, which offers a very extraordinary catalogue of the ritual and ceremonies of the Romish church. It is indeed impossible to translate into Protestant English, the multiplied nomenclature of offices which involve human life in never-ceasing service. As I know not where we can find so clear a perspective of this amazing contrivance to fetter with religious ceremonies the freedom of the human mind, I present the reader with an accurate translation of it.

"*Pietro Aretino to the Queen of England.*

"The voices of Psalms, the sound of Canticles, the breath of Epistles, and the Spirit of Gospels, had need unloose the language of my words in congratulating your superhuman Majesty on having not only restored conscience to the minds and hearts of Englishmen and taken deceitful heresy away from them, but on bringing it to pass, when it was least hoped for, that charity and faith were again born and raised up in them; on which sudden conversion triumphs our sovereign Pontiff Julius, the College and the whole of the clergy, so that it seems in Rome as if the shades of the old Cæsars with visible effect showed it in their very statues; meanwhile the pure mind of his most blessed Holiness canonizes you, and marks you in the catalogue among the Catharines and Margarets, and dedicates you," &c.

"The stupor of so stupendous a miracle is not the stupefaction of stupid wonder; and all proceeds from your being in the grace of God in every deed, whose incomprehensible goodness is pleased with seeing you, in holiness of life and innocence of heart, cause to be restored in those proud coun-

tries, solemnity to Easters, abstinence to Lents, sobriety to Fridays, parsimony to Saturdays, fulfilment to vows, fasts to vigils, observances to seasons, chrism to creatures, unction to the dying, festivals to saints, images to churches, masses to altars, lights to lamps, organs to quires, benedictions to olives, robings to sacristies, and decencies to baptisms; and that nothing may be wanting (thanks to your pious and most entire nature,) possession has been regained to offices of hours; to ceremonies, of incense; to reliques, of shrines; to the confessed, of absolution; to priests, of habits; to preachers, of pulpits; to ecclesiastics, of pre-eminences; to scriptures, of interpreters; to hosts, of communions; to the poor, of alms; to the wretched, of hospitals; to virgins, of monasteries; to fathers, of convents; to the clergy, of orders; to the defunct, of obsequies; to tierces, noons, vespers, complins, ave-maries and matins, the privileges of daily and nightly bells."

The fortunate temerity of Aretino gave birth to subsequent publications by more skilful writers. Nicolo Franco closely followed, who had at first been the amanuensis of Aretino, then his rival, and concluded his literary adventures by being hanged at Rome; a circumstance which at the time must have occasioned regret that Franco had not, in this respect also, been an imitator of his original, a man equally feared, flattered, and despised.

The greatest personages and the most esteemed writers of that age were perhaps pleased to have discovered a new and easy path to fame; and since it was ascertained that a man might become celebrated by writings never intended for the press, and which it never was imagined could confer fame on the writers, volumes succeeded volumes, and some authors are scarcely known to posterity but as letter-writers. We have the too elaborate epistles of Bembo, secretary to Leo X. and the more elegant correspondence of Annibal Caro; a work which, though posthumous and published by an affectionate nephew, and therefore too undiscerning a publisher, is a model of familiar letters.

These collections being found agreeable to the taste of their readers, novelty was courted by composing letters more expressly adapted to public curiosity. The subjects were

now diversified by critical and political topics, till at length they descended to one more level with the faculties, and more grateful to the passions of the populace of readers—Love! Many grave personages had already, without being sensible of the ridiculous, languished through tedious odes and starch sonnets. Doni, a bold literary projector, who invented a literary review both of printed and manuscript works, with not inferior ingenuity, published his *love-letters;* and with the felicity of an Italian diminutive, he fondly entitled them "Pistolette Amorose del Doni, 1552, 8vo." These Pistole, were designed to be little epistles, or ballets-doux, but Doni was one of those fertile authors who have too little time of their own, to compose short works. Doni was too facetious to be sentimental, and his quill was not plucked from the wing of Love. He was followed by a graver pedant, who threw a heavy offering on the altar of the Graces; Parabosco, who in six books of "Lettere Amorose, 1565, 8vo." was too phlegmatic to sigh over his ink-stand.

Denina mentions Lewis Pasqualigo of Venice as an improver of these amatory epistles, by introducing a deeper interest and a more complicate narrative. Partial to the Italian literature, Denina considers this author as having given birth to those *novels* in the form of *letters*, with which modern Europe has been inundated; and he refers the curious in literary researches, for the precursors of these *epistolary novels*, to the works of those Italian wits who flourished in the sixteenth century.

"The Worlds" of Doni, and the numerous whimsical works of Ortensio Landi, and the Circe of Gelli, of which we have more than one English translation, which under their fantastic inventions cover the most profound philosophical views, have been considered the precursors of the finer genius of "The Persian Letters," that fertile mother of a numerous progeny, of D'Argens and others.

The Italians are justly proud of some valuable collections of letters, which seem peculiar to themselves, and which may be considered as the works of *artists*. They have a collection of "Lettere di Dredici Uomini Illustri," which appeared in 1571; another more curious, relating to princes—"Let-

tere de' Principi le quali o si scrivono da Principi a Principi, o ragionano di Principi; Venezia, 1581," in 3 vols. quarto.

But a treasure of this kind, peculiarly interesting to the artist, has appeared in more recent times, in seven quarto volumes, consisting ef the original letters of the great painters, from the golden age of Leo X., gradually collected by Bottari, who published them in separate volumes. They abound in the most interesting facts relative to the arts, and display the characteristic traits of their lively writers. Every artist will turn over with delight and curiosity these genuine effusions; chronicles of the dreams of the days and the nights of their vivacious brothers.

It is a little remarkable that he who claims to be the first satirist in the English language, claims also, more justly perhaps, the honour of being the first author who published familiar letters. In the dedication of his Epistles to prince Henry, the son of James the First, Bishop Hall claims the honour of introducing "this new fashion of discourse by epistles, new to our language, usual to others; and as novelty is never without plea of use, more free, more familiar." Of these epistles, in six decades, many were written during his travels. We have a collection of Donne's letters abounding with his peculiar points, at least witty if not natural.

As we became a literary nation, familiar letters served as a vehicle for the fresh feelings of our first authors. Howell, whose Epistolæ bear his name, takes a wider circumference in "Familiar Letters, domestic and foreign, historical, political, and philosophical, upon emergent occasions." The "emergent occasions" the lively writer found in his long confinement in the Fleet, that English Parnassus! Howell is a wit, who, in writing his own history, has written that of his own times; he is one of the few whose genius, striking in the heat of the moment only current coin, produce finished medals for the cabinet. His letters are still published. The taste which had now arisen for collecting letters, induced Sir Tobie Mathews, in 1660, to form a volume, of which many, if not all, are genuine productions of their different writers.

The dissipated elegance of Charles II. inspired freedom in letter writing. The royal emigrant had caught the tone of

Voiture. We have some few letters of the wits of this court, but that school of writers, having sinned in gross materialism, the reaction produced another of a more spiritual nature, in a romantic strain of the most refined sentiment. Volumes succeeded volumes from pastoral and heroic minds. Katherine Philips, in the masquerade-dress of "The matchless Orinda," addressed Sir Charles Cottrel her grave "Poliarchus;" while Mrs. Behn, in her loose dress, assuming the nymph-like form of "Astræa," pursued a gentleman, concealed in a domino, under the name of "Lycidas."

Before our letters reached to nature and truth, they were strained by one more effort after novelty; a new species appeared, "From the Dead to the Living," by Mrs. Rowe: they obtained celebrity. She was the first who, to gratify the public taste, adventured beyond the Styx; the caprice of public favour has returned them to the place whence they came.

The letters of Pope were unquestionably written for the public eye. Partly accident, and partly persevering ingenuity, extracted from the family chests the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, who long remained the model of letter-writing. The Letters of Hughes and of Shenstone, of Gray, Cowper and Walpole, and others, self-painters, whose indelible colours have given an imperishable charm to these fragments of the human mind, may close our subject; printed familiar letters now enter into the history of our literature.

CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS:

INCLUDING

SOME INQUIRIES RESPECTING THEIR MORAL AND LITERARY CHARACTERS.

"Such a superiority do the pursuits of Literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions."—HUME.

PREFACE.

The Calamities of Authors have often excited the attention of the lovers of literature; and, from the revival of letters to this day, this class of the community, the most ingenious and the most enlightened, have, in all the nations of Europe, been the most honoured, and the least remunerated. Pierius Valerianus, an attendant in the literary court of Leo X., who twice refused a bishoprick that he might pursue his studies uninterrupted, was a friend of Authors, and composed a small work, "De Infelicitate Literatorum," which has been frequently reprinted.* It forms a catalogue of several Italian literati, his contemporaries; a meagre performance, in which the author shows sometimes a predilection for the marvellous, which happens so rarely in human affairs; and he is so unphilosophical, that he places among the misfortunes of literary men, those fatal casualties to which all men are alike liable. Yet even this small volume has its value; for although the historian confines his narrative to his own times, he includes a sufficient number of names to convince us that to devote our life to authorship is not the true means of improving our happiness or our fortune.

At a later period, a congenial work was composed by Theophilus Spizelius, a German divine; his four volumes are after the fashion of his country and his times, which could make even small things ponderous. In 1680 he first published two volumes, entitled "Infelix Literatus;" and five years afterwards his "Felicissimus Literatus;" he writes without size, and sermonises without end, and seems to have been so grave a lover of symmetry that he shapes his *Felicities* just with the same measure as his *Infelicities*. These two equalised bundles of hay might have held in suspense the casuistical ass of Sterne, till he had died from want of a motive to choose either. Yet Spizelius is not to be contemned because he is verbose and heavy; he has reflected more deeply than Valerianus, by opening the moral causes of those calamities which he describes.†

The chief object of the present work is to ascertain some doubtful yet important points concerning Authors. The title of Author still retains

* A modern writer observes that "Valeriano is chiefly known to the present times by his brief but curious and interesting work, *De Literatorum Infelicitate*, which has preserved many anecdotes of the principal scholars of the age, not elsewhere to be found."—Roscoe's *Leo X.* vol. iv. p. 175.

† There is also a bulky collection of this kind, entitled, *Analecta de Calamitate Literatorum*, edited by Mencken, the author of *Charlataneria Eruditorum*.

its seduction among our youth, and is consecrated by ages. Yet what affectionate parent would consent to see his son devote himself to his pen as a profession? The studies of a true Author insulate him in society, exacting daily labours; yet he will not receive but little encouragement, and less remuneration. It will be found that the most successful Author can obtain no equivalent for the labours of his life. I have endeavoured to ascertain this fact, to develope the causes and to paint the variety of evils that naturally result from the disappointments of genius. Authors themselves never discover this melancholy truth, till they have yielded to an impulse, and adopted a profession, too late in life to resist the one, or abandon the other. Whoever labours without hope, a painful state to which Authors are at length reduced, may surely be placed among the most injured class in the community. Most authors close their lives in apathy or despair, and too many live by means which few of them would not blush to describe.

Besides this perpetual struggle with penury, there are also moral causes which influence the literary character. I have drawn the individual characters and feelings of authors from their own confessions, or deduced them from the prevalent events of their lives; and often discovered them in their secret history, as it floats on tradition, or lies concealed in authentic and original documents. I would paint what has not been unhappily called the *psychological* character.*

I have limited my inquiries to our own country, and generally to recent times; for researches more curious, and eras more distant, would less forcibly act on our sympathy. If, in attempting to avoid the naked brevity of Valerianus, I have taken a more comprehensive view of several of our authors, it has been with the hope that I was throwing a new light on their characters, or contributing some fresh materials to our literary history. I feel anxious for the fate of the opinions and the feelings which have arisen in the progress and diversity of this work; but whatever their errors may be, it is to them that my readers at least owe the materials of which it is formed; these materials will be received with consideration, as the confessions and statements of genius itself. In mixing them with my own feelings, let me apply a beautiful apologue of the Hebrews: "The clusters of grapes sent out of Babylon, implore favour for the exhuberant leaves of the vine; for had there been no leaves, you had lost the grapes."

* From the Grecian *Psyche*, or the soul, the Germans have borrowed this expressive term. They have a *Psychological Magazine*. Some of our own recent authors have adopted the term peculiarly adapted to the historian of the human mind.

THE

CALAMITIES OF AUTHORS.

AUTHORS BY PROFESSION.

GUTHRIE AND AMHURST—DRAKE—SMOLLETT.

A GREAT author once surprised me by inquiring what I meant by "an Author by Profession." He seemed offended at the supposition that I was creating an odious distinction between authors; I was only placing it among their calamities.

The title of AUTHOR is venerable; and in the ranks of national glory, authors mingle with its heroes and its patriots. It is indeed by our authors that foreigners have been taught most to esteem us; and this remarkably appears in the expression of Gemelli, the Italian traveller round the world, who wrote about the year 1700; for he told all Europe that "he could find nothing amongst us but our writings to distinguish us from the worst of barbarians." But to become an "Author by Profession," is to have no other means of subsistence, than such as are extracted from the quill; and no one believes these to be so precarious as they really are, until disappointed, distressed, and thrown out of every pursuit which can maintain independence, the noblest mind is cast into the lot of a doomed labourer.

Literature abounds with instances of "Authors by profession" accommodating themselves to this condition. By vile artifices of faction and popularity their moral sense is injured, and the literary character sits in that study which he ought to dignify, merely, as one of them sings,

"To keep his mutton twirling at the fire."

Another has said, "He is a fool who is a grain honester than the times he lives in."

Let it not, therefore, be conceived that I mean to degrade or vilify the literary character, when I would only separate the Author from those pollutors of the press, who have turned a vestal into a prostitute; a grotesque race of famished buffoons or laughing assassins; or that populace of unhappy beings, who are driven to perish in their garrets, unknown and unregarded by all, for illusions which even their calamities cannot disperse. Poverty, said an ancient, is a sacred thing—it is indeed, so sacred, that it creates a sympathy even for those who have incurred it by their folly, or plead by it for their crimes.

The history of our Literature is instructive—let us trace the origin of characters of this sort among us: some of them have happily disappeared, and whenever great authors obtain their due rights, the calamities of literature will be greatly diminished.

As for the phrase of "Authors by Profession," it is said to be of modern origin; and GUTHRIE, a great dealer in literature, and a political scribe, is thought to have introduced it, as descriptive of a class of writers which he wished to distinguish from the general term. I present the reader with an unpublished letter of Guthrie, in which the phrase will not only be found, but, what is still more important, which exhibits the character in its degraded form. It was addressed to a minister.

"My Lord, *June* 3, 1762.

"In the year 1745-6, Mr. Pelham, then first Lord of the Treasury, acquainted me, that it was His Majesty's pleasure I should receive, till better provided for, which never has happened, 200*l.* a year, to be paid by him and his successors in the Treasury. I was satisfied with the august name made use of, and the appointment has been regularly and quarterly paid me ever since. I have been equally punctual in doing the government all the services that fell within my abilities or sphere of life, especially in those critical situations that call for unanimity in the service of the crown.

"Your Lordship may possibly now suspect that *I am an Author by Profession:* you are not deceived; and will be less so, if you believe that I am disposed to serve His Majesty under your Lordship's *future patronage and protection, with greater zeal if possible than ever.*

"I have the hoonur to be,
"My Lord, &c.
"WILLIAM GUTHRIE."

Unblushing venality! In one part he shouts like a plundering hussar who has carried off his prey; and in the other he bows with the tame suppleness of the "quarterly" Swiss chaffering his halbert for his price;—"to serve his Majesty" for—"his Lordship's future patronage."

Guthrie's notion of "An Author by Profession," entirely derived from his own character, was two-fold; literary task-work, and political degradation. He was to be a gentleman convertible into a historian, at —— per sheet; and, when he had not time to write histories, he chose to sell his name to those he never wrote.—These are mysteries of the craft of authorship; in this sense it is only a trade, and a very bad one! But when in his other capacity, this gentleman comes to hire himself to one lord as he had to another, no one can doubt that the stipendiary would change his principles with his livery.*

Such have been some of the "Authors by Profession" who have worn the literary mask; for literature was not the first object of their designs. They form a race peculiar to our country. They opened their career in our first great revolution, and flourished during the eventful period of the civil wars. In the form of newspapers, their "Mercuries" and "Diurnals" were political pamphlets.† Of these, the royal-

* It has been lately disclosed that HOME, the author of "Douglas," was pensioned by Lord Bute to answer all the papers and pamphlets of the government, and to be a vigilant defender of the measures of goverment.

† I have elsewhere portrayed the personal characters of the hireling chiefs of these paper wars: the versatile and unprincipled Marchmont Needham, the Cobbett of his day: the factious Sir Roger L'Estrange; and the bantering and profligate Sir John Birkenhead.

ists, being the better educated, carried off to their side all the spirit, and only left the foam and dregs for the parliamentarians; otherwise, in lying, they were just like one another; for "the father of lies" seems to be of no party! Were it desirable to instruct men by a system of political and moral calumny, the complete art might be drawn from these archives of political lying, during their flourishing era. We might discover principles among them which would have humbled the genius of Machiavel himself, and even have taught Mr. Sheridan's more popular scribe, Mr. Puff, a sense of his own inferiority.

It is known that, during the administration of Harley and Walpole, this class of authors swarmed and started up like mustard-seed in a hot-bed. More than fifty thousand pounds were expended among them! Faction, with mad and blind passions, can affix a value on the basest things that serve its purpose.* These "Authors by Profession" wrote more assiduously the better they were paid; but as attacks only produced replies and rejoinders, to remunerate them was heightening the fever and feeding the disease. They were all fighting for present pay, with a view of the promised land before them; but they at length became so numerous, and so crowded on one another, that the minister could neither satisfy promised claims nor actual dues. He had not at last the humblest office to bestow, not a commissionership of wine licenses, as Tacitus Gordon had: not even a collectorship of the customs in some obscure town, as was the wretched worn-out Oldmixon's pittance;† not a crumb for a mouse!

* An ample view of these lucubrations is exhibited in the early volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine.

† It was said of this man that "he had submitted to labour at the press, like a horse in a mill, till he became as blind and as wretched." To show the extent of the conscience of this class of writers, and to what lengths mere party-writers can proceed, when duly encouraged, Oldmixon, who was a Whig historian, if a violent party-writer ought ever to be dignified by so venerable a title, unmercifully rigid to all other historians, was himself guilty of the crimes with which he so loudly accused others. He charged three eminent persons with interpolating Lord Clarendon's History; this charge was afterwards disproved by the passages being produced in his Lordship's own hand-writing, which had been for-

The captain of this banditti in the administration of Walpole was Arnall, a young attorney, whose mature genius for scurrilous party-papers broke forth in his tender nonage. This hireling was "The Free Briton," and in "The Gazetteer" *Francis Walsingham, Esq.*, abusing the name of a profound statesman. It is said that, he received above ten thousand pounds for his obscure labours; and this patriot was suffered to retire with all the dignity which a pension could confer. He not only wrote for hire, but valued himself on it; proud of the pliancy of his pen and of his principles, he wrote without remorse what his patron was forced to pay for, but to disavow. It was from a knowledge of these "Authors by Profession," writers of a faction in the name of the community, as they have been well described, that our great statesman Pitt fell into an error which he lived to regret. He did not distinguish between authors; he confounded the mercenary with the men of talent and character; and with this contracted view of the political influence of genius, he must have viewed with awe, perhaps with surprise, its mighty labour in the volumes of Burke.

But these "Authors by Profession" sometimes found a retribution of their crimes even from their masters. When the ardent patron was changed into a cold minister, their pen seemed wonderfully to have lost its point, and the feather could not any more tickle. They were flung off, as Shakespeare's striking imagery expresses it, like

> "An unregarded bulrush on the stream,
> To rot itself with motion."

Look on the fate and fortune of AMHURST. The life of this "Author by Profession" points a moral. He flourished about the year 1730. He passed through a youth of iniquity, and was expelled his college for his irregularities; he had exhibited no marks of regeneration when he assailed the university with the periodical paper of the *Terræ Filius*; a witty Saturnalian effusion on the manners and toryism of Oxford,

tunately preserved; and yet this accuser of interpolation, when employed by Bishop Kennett to publish his collection of our historians, made no scruple of falsifying numerous passages in Daniel's Chronicle, which makes the first edition of that collection of no value.

where the portraits have an extravagant kind of likeness, and are so false and so true that they were universally relished and individually understood. Amhurst, having lost his character, hastened to reform the morals and politics of the nation. For near twenty years he toiled at "The Craftsman," of which ten thousand are said to have been sold in one day. Admire this patriot! an expelled collegian becomes an outrageous zealot for popular reform, and an intrepid Whig can bend to be yoked to all the drudgery of a faction! Amhurst succeeded in writing out the minister, and writing in Bolingbroke and Pulteney. Now came the hour of gratitude and generosity! His patrons mounted into power—but—they silently dropped the instrument of their ascension. The political prostitute stood shivering at the gate of preferment, which his masters had for ever flung against him. He died broken-hearted, and owed the charity of a grave to his bookseller.

I must add one more striking example, of a political author, in the case of Dr. James Drake; a man of genius, and an excellent writer. He resigned an honourable profession. that of medicine, to adopt a very contrary one, that of becoming an author by profession for a party. As a tory writer, he dared every extremity of the law, while he evaded it by every subtlety of artifice; he sent a masked lady with his MS. to the printer, who was never discovered; and was once saved by a flaw in the indictment from the simple change of an *r* for a *t*, or *nor* for *not;* one of those shameful evasions, by which the law, to its perpetual disgrace, so often protects the criminal from punishment. Dr. Drake had the honour of hearing himself censured from the throne; of being imprisoned; of seeing his "Memorials of the Church of England" burned at London, and his "Historia Anglo-Scotica" at Edinburgh. Having enlisted himself in the pay of the booksellers, among other works, I suspect, he condescended to practise some literary impositions. For he has reprinted Father Parson's famous libel against the Earl of Leicester in Elizabeth's reign, under the title of "Secret Memoirs of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1706, 8vo, with a preface pretending it was printed from an old MS.

Drake was a lover of literature; he left behind him a ver-

sion of Herodotus, and a "System of Anatomy," once the most popular and curious of its kind. After all this turmoil of his literary life, neither his masked lady nor the flaws in his indictments availed him.—Government brought a writ of error, severely prosecuted him; and, abandoned, as usual, by those for whom he had annihilated a genius which deserved a better fate, his perturbed spirit broke out into a fever, and he died raving against cruel persecutors, and patrons not much more humane.

So much for some of those who have been "Authors by Profession" in one of the two-fold capacities which Guthrie designed, that of writing for a minister; the other, that of writing for the bookseller, though far more honourable, is sufficiently calamitous.

In commercial times, the hope of profit is always a stimulating, but a degrading motive; it dims the clearest intellect, it stills the proudest feelings. Habit and prejudice will soon reconcile even genius to the work of money, and to avow the motive without a blush. "An author by profession," at once ingenious and ingenuous, declared that, "till fame appears to be worth more than money, he would always prefer money to fame." JOHNSON had a notion that there existed no motive for writing, but money! Yet, crowned heads have sighed with the ambition of authorship, though this great master of the human mind could suppose that on this subject men were not actuated either by the love of glory or of pleasure! FIELDING, an author of great genius and of "the profession," in one of his Covent-garden Journals asserts, that "An author, in a country where there is no public provision for men of genius, is not obliged to be a more disinterested patriot than any other. Why is he whose *livelihood is in his pen*, a greater monster in using it to serve himself, than he who uses his tongue for the same purpose?"

But it is a very important question to ask, Is this "livelihood in the pen" really such? Authors drudging on in obscurity, and enduring miseries which can never close but with their life—shall this be worth even the humble designation of a "livelihood?" I am not now combating with them whether their task-work degrades them, but whether they are

receiving an equivalent for the violation of their genius
the weight of the fetters they are wearing, and for the ent
miseries which form an author's sole legacies to his w
and his children. Far from me is the wish to degrade
rature by the inquiry; but it will be useful to many a y
of promising talent, who is impatient to abandon all profes
for this one, to consider well the calamities in which he
most probably participate.

Among "Authors by Profession"—who has display
more fruitful genius, and exercised more intense industry,
a loftier sense of his independence, than SMOLLET? But
into his life and enter into his feelings, and you will be sh
ed at the disparity of his situation with the genius of the
His life was a succession of struggles, vexations, and d
pointments, yet of success in his writings. Smollett, w
a great poet, though he has written little in verse, and w
rich genius composed the most original pictures of hu
life, was compelled by his wants to debase his name by
ing it to voyages and translations, which he never could
read. When he had worn himself down in the servi
the public, or the booksellers, there remained not, of a
slender remunerations, in the last stage of life, sufficie
convey him to a cheap country and a restorative air o
Continent. The father may have thought himself fortu
that the daughter whom he loved with more than con
affection was no more to share in his wants; but the hus
had by his side the faithful companion of his life, left wi
a wreck of fortune. Smollett, gradually perishing in a fo
land, neglected by an admiring public, and without fres
sources from the booksellers, who were receiving the in
of his works—threw out his injured feelings in the char
of *Bramble;* the warm generosity of his temper, but no
genius, seemed fleeting with his breath. In a foreign
his widow marked by a plain monument the spot of his b
and she perished in solitude! Yet Smollett dead—soo
ornamental column is raised at the place of his birth,
the grave of the author seemed to multiply the editions
works. There are indeed grateful feelings in the pub
large for a favourite author; but the awful testimony of

feelings, by its gradual progress, must appear beyond the grave! They visit the column consecrated by his name, and his features are most loved, most venerated, in the bust.

Smollett himself shall be the historian of his own heart; this most successful "Author by Profession," who, for his subsistence, composed master-works of genius, and drudged in the toils of slavery, shall himself tell us what happened, and describe that state between life and death, partaking of both, which obscured his faculties, and sickened his lofty spirit.

"Had some of those who were pleased to call themselves my friends been at any pains to deserve the character, and told me ingenuously what I had to expect in *the capacity of an author, when I first professed myself of that venerable fraternity*, I should in all probability have spared myself the *incredible labour and chagrin I have since undergone*."

As a relief from literary labour, Smollett once went to revisit his family, and to embrace the mother he loved; but such was the irritation of his mind and the infirmity of his health, exhausted by the hard labours of authorship, that he never passed a more weary summer, nor ever found himself so incapable of indulging the warmest emotions of his heart. On his return, in a letter, he gave this melancholy narrative of himself:—"Between friends, I am now convinced that *my brain was in some measure affected;* for I had a kind of *Coma Vigil* upon me from April to November, without intermission. In consideration of this circumstance, I know you will forgive all my peevishness and discontent; tell Mrs. Moore that with regard to me, she has as yet seen nothing but the wrong side of the tapestry." Thus it happens in the life of authors, that they whose comic genius diffuses cheerfulness, create a pleasure which they cannot themselves participate.

The *Coma Vigil* may be described by a verse of Shakespeare:—

"Still-waking sleep! that is not what it is!"

Of praise and censure, says Smollett in a letter to Dr. Moore, "Indeed I am sick of both, and wish to God my circumstances would allow me to consign my pen to oblivion."

A wish, as fervently repeated by many "Authors by
sion," who are not so fully entitled as was Smollett t
when he chose, or to have lived in quiet for what
written. An author's life is therefore too often depr
all social comfort, whether he be the writer for a mini
a bookseller—but their case requires to be stated.

THE CASE OF AUTHORS STATED,

INCLUDING THE HISTORY OF LITERARY PROPERT

JOHNSON has dignified the booksellers as "the pa
literature," which was generous in that great auth
had written well and lived but ill all his life on that pa
Eminent booksellers, in their constant intercourse v
most enlightened class of the community, that is, v
best authors and the best readers, partake of the inte
around them; their great capitals, too, are productive
and evil in literature; useful when they carry on grea
and pernicious when they sanction indifferent ones.
they but commercial men. A trader can never be d
patron, for it would be romantic to purchase what is n
able; and where no favour is conferred, there is no pa

Authors continue poor, and booksellers become
an extraordinary result! Booksellers are not agents
thors, but proprietors of their works; so that the perp
venues of literature are solely in the possession of the

Is it then wonderful that even successful authors a
gent? They are heirs to fortunes, but by a strange sin
they are disinherited at their birth; for, on the publi
their works, these cease to be their own property.
natural property be secured, and a good book would b
heritance, a leasehold or a freehold, as you choo
might at least last out a generation, and descend to the
blood, were they permitted to live on their father's g

in all other property they do on his industry.* Something of this nature has been instituted in France, where the descendants of Corneille and Molière retain a claim on the theatres whenever the dramas of their great ancestors are performed. In that country, literature has ever received peculiar honours —it was there decreed, in the affair of Crebillon, that literary productions are not seizable by creditors.†

The history of literary property in this country might form as ludicrous a narrative as Lucian's "true history." It was a long while doubtful whether any such thing existed, at the very time when booksellers were assigning over the perpetual copyrights of books, and making them the subject of family settlements for the provision of their wives and children! When Tonson in 1739 obtained an injunction to restrain another bookseller from printing Milton's Paradise Lost, he brought into court as a proof of his title an assignment of the original copyright, made over by the sublime poet in 1667,

* The following facts will show the value of *literary property;* immense profits and cheap purchases! The manuscript of "Robinson Crusoe" ran through the whole trade, and no one would print it; the bookseller who did purchase it, who it is said was not remarkable for his discernment, but for a speculative turn, got a thousand guineas by it. How many have the booksellers since accumulated? Burn's "Justice" was disposed of by its author for a trifle, as well as Buchan's "Domestic Medicine;" these works yield annual incomes. Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield" was sold in the hour of distress, with little distinction from any other work in that class of composition; and "Evelina" produced five guineas from the niggardly trader. Dr. Johnson fixed the price of his "Biography of the Poets" at two hundred guineas; and Mr. Malone observes, the booksellers in the course of twenty-five years have probably got five thousand. I could add a great number of facts of this nature which relate to living writers; the profits of their own works for two or three years would rescue them from the horrors and humiliation of pauperism. It is, perhaps, useful to record, that, while the compositions of genius are but slightly remunerated, though sometimes as productive as "the household stuff" of literature, the latter is rewarded with princely magnificence. At the sale of the Robinsons, the copyright of "Vyse's Spelling-book" was sold at the enormous price of 2200*l.*, with an *annuity* of fifty guineas to the author!

† The circumstance, with the poet's dignified petition, and the King's honourable decree, are preserved in "Curiosities of Literature," p. 147, 11th edition, 1839.

which was read. Milton received for this assignment the s
which we all know—Tonson and all his family and assign
rode in their carriages with the profits of the five-pound ep

The verbal and tasteless lawyers, not many years past, w
legal metaphysics, wrangled like the schoolmen, inquiring
each other, "whether the *style* and *ideas* of an author w
tangible things; or if these were a *property*, how is *possess*
to be taken, or any act of *occupancy* made on mere intellec
ideas." Nothing, said they, can be an object of prope
but which has a corporeal substance; the air and the li
to which they compared an author's ideas, are common to
ideas in the MS. state were compared to birds in a cage; w
the author confines them in his own dominion, none but
has a right to let them fly; but the moment he allows
bird to escape from his hand, it is no violation of property
any one to make it his own. And to prove that there exis
no property after publication, they found an analogy in
gathering of acorns, or in seizing on a vacant piece of grou
and thus degrading that most refined piece of art formed
the highest state of society, a literary production, they brou
us back to a state of nature; and seem to have conclu
that literary property was purely ideal; a phantom whic

* The elder Tonson's portrait represents him in his gown and
holding in his right hand a volume lettered "Paradise Lost"—such
vourite object was Milton and copyright! Jacob Tonson was the fo
er of a race who long honoured literature. His rise in life is cur
He was at first unable to pay twenty pounds for a play by Dryden
joined with another bookseller to advance that sum; the play sold,
Tonson was afterwards enabled to purchase the succeeding ones.
and his nephew died worth two hundred thousand pounds.—Muc
Tonson owed to his own industry; but he was a mere trader. He
Dryden had frequent bickerings; he insisted on receiving 10,000 v
for two hundred and sixty-eight pounds, and poor Dryden threw in
finest Ode in the language towards the number. He would pay in
base coin which was then current; which was a loss to the poet.
son once complained to Dryden, that he had only received 1446 lin
his translation of Ovid for his Miscellany for fifty guineas, when he
calculated at the rate of 1518 lines for forty guineas; he gives the
a piece of critical reasoning, that he considered he had a better ba
with "Juvenal," which is reckoned "not so easy to translate as O
In these times such a mere trader in literature has disappeared.

its author could neither grasp nor confine to himself, he must entirely depend on the public benevolence for his reward.*

The Ideas, that is, the work of an author, are "tangible things." "There are works," to quote the words of a near and dear relative," which require great learning, great industry, great labour, and great capital, in their preparation. They assume a palpable form. You may fill warehouses with them, and freight ships; and the tenure by which they are held is superior to that of all other property, for it is original. It is tenure which does not exist in a doubtful title; which does not spring from any adventitious circumstances;—it is not found—it is not purchased—it is not prescriptive—it is original; so it is the most natural of all titles, because it is the most simple and least artificial. It is paramount and sovereign, because it is a tenure by creation."†

There were indeed some more generous spirits and better philosophers fortunately found on the same bench; and the identity of a literary composition was resolved into its sentiments and language, besides what was more obviously valuable to some persons, the print and paper. On this slight principle was issued the profound award which accorded a certain term of years to any work, however immortal. They could not diminish the immortality of a book, but only its reward. In all the litigations respecting literary property, authors were little considered—except some honourable testimonies due to genius, from the sense of WILLES, and the eloquence of MANSFIELD. Literary property was still disputed, like the rights of a parish common. An honest printer, who could not always write grammar, had the shrewdness to make a bold effort in this scramble, and perceiving that even by this last favourable award all literary property would necessarily centre with the booksellers, now stood forward for his own body, the printers. This rough advocate observed, that "a few persons, who call themselves *booksellers*, about the number of *twenty-five*, have kept the *monopoly of books and copies* in their hands, to the entire exclusion of all others; but more

* Sir James Burrows' Reports on the question concerning Literary Property, 4to. London, 1773.

† Mirror of Parliament, 3529.

especially the *printers*, whom they have always held it a never to let become purchasers in *copy*." Not a word fo *authors!* As for them, they were doomed by both parti the fat oblation; they, indeed, sent forth some meek b ings; but what were AUTHORS, between judges, booksel and printers? the sacrificed among the sacrificers!

All this was reasoning in a circle. LITERARY PROPERT our nation arose from a *new state of society*.—These law could never develop its nature by wild analogies, nor disc it in any common-law right; for our common law, comp of immemorial customs, could never have had in its con plation an object which could not have existed in barba periods. Literature, in its enlarged spirit, certainly n entered into the thoughts or attention of our rude ances All their views were bounded by the necessaries of life; as yet they had no conception of the impalpable, invisible sovereign dominion of the human mind—enough for our r heroes was that of the seas! Before the reign of H VIII. great authors composed occasionally a book in L which none but other great authors cared for, and whic people could not read. In the reign of Elizabeth, R ASCHAM appeared: one of those men of genius born to e a new era in the history of their nation. The first En author who may be regarded as the founder of our *prose* was Roger Ascham, the venerable parent of our *native rature*. At a time when our scholars affected to contemn vernacular idiom, and in their Latin works were losing better fame, that of being understood by all their country Ascham boldly avowed the design of setting an exampl his own words, TO SPEAK AS THE COMMON PEOPLE, TO T AS WISE MEN. His pristine English is still forcible without antry, and still beautifull without ornament. The illustr BACON condescended to follow this new example, in the popular of his works. This change in our literature was l revelation; these men taught us our language in books. W came a reading people; and then the demand for books rally produced a new order of authors, who traded in litera It was then, so early as in the Elizabethan age, that *lite property* may be said to derive its obscure origin in this na It was protected in an indirect manner by the *licensers* of

press; for although that was a mere political institution, only designed to prevent seditious and irreligious publications, yet, as no book could be printed without a license, there was honour enough in the licensers not to allow other publishers to infringe on the privilege granted to the first claimant. In Queen Anne's time, when the office of licensers was extinguished, a more liberal genius was rising in the nation, and *literary property* received a more definite and a more powerful protection. A limited term was granted to every author to reap the fruits of his labours; and Lord Hardwicke pronounced this statute "a universal patent for authors." Yet subsequently, the subject of *literary property* involved discussion; even at so late a period as in 1769, it was still to be litigated. It was then granted that originally an author had at common law a property in his work, but that the act of Anne took away all copyright after the expiration of the terms it permitted.

As the matter now stands, let us address an arithmetical age—but my pen hesitates to bring down my subject to an argument fitted to "these coster-monger times."* On the present principle of literary property, it results that an author diposes of a leasehold property of twenty-eight years, often for less than the price of one year's purchase! How many living authors are the sad witnesses of this fact, who, like so many Esaus, have sold their inheritance for a meal! I leave the whole school of Adam Smith to calm their calculating emotions concerning "that unprosperous race of men" (sometimes this master-seer calls them "unproductive"). "commonly called *men of letters*" who are pretty much in the situation which lawyers and physicians would be in, were these, as he tells us, in that state when "*a scholar* and *a beggar* seem to have been very nearly *synonymous terms*"—and this melancholy fact that a man of genius discovered, without the feather of his pen brushing away a tear from his lid—without one spontaneous and indignant groan!

* A Coster-monger, or Costard-monger, is a dealer in apples, which are so called because they are shaped like a *costard*, *i. e.* a man's head. *Steevens.*—Johnson explains the phrase eloquently: "In these times when the prevalence of trade has produced that meanness, that rates the merit of everything by money."

Authors may exclaim, "we ask for justice, not charity." They would not need to require any favour, nor claim any other than that protection which an enlightened government in its wisdom and its justice, must bestow. They would leave to the public disposition the sole appreciation of their works: their book must make its own fortune; a bad work may be cried up, and a good work may be cried down; but Faction will soon lose its voice, and Truth acquire one. The cause we are pleading is not the calamities of indifferent writers, but of those whose utility, or whose genius, long survives that limited term which has been so hardly wrenched from the penurious hand of verbal lawyers. Every lover of literature and every votary of humanity, has long felt indignant at that sordid state and all those secret sorrows to which men of the finest genius, or of sublime industry, are reduced and degraded in society. Johnson himself, who rejected that perpetuity of literary property, which some enthusiasts seemed to claim at the time the subject was undergoing the discussion of the judges, is however for extending the copyright to a *century*. Could authors secure this their natural right, literature would acquire a permanent and a nobler reward; for great authors would then be distinguished by the very profits they would receive, from that obscure multitude, whose common disgraces they frequently participate, notwithstanding the superiority of their own genius. Johnson himself will serve as a proof of the incompetent remuneration of literary property. He undertook and he performed a Herculean labour, which employed him so many years that the price he obtained was exhausted before the work was concluded:—the wages did not even last as long as the labour! Where then is the author to look forward, when such works are undertaken, for a provision for his family, or for his future existence? It would naturally arise from the work itself, were authors not the most ill-treated and oppressed class of the community. The daughter of MILTON need not have craved the alms of the admirers of her father, if the right of authors had been better protected; his own Paradise Lost had then been her better portion, and her most honourable inheritance. The children of BURNS would have required no subscriptions; that annual tribute which the

public pay to the genius of their parent was their due, and would have been their fortune.

Authors now submit to have a shorter life than their own celebrity. While the book markets of Europe are supplied with the writings of English authors, and they have a wider diffusion in America than at home, it seems a national ingratitude to limit the existence of works for their authors to a short number of years, and then to seize on their possession for ever.

THE SUFFERINGS OF AUTHORS.

The *natural rights and properties of* Authors not having been sufficiently protected, they are defrauded, not indeed of their fame, though they may not always live to witness it, but of their *uninterrupted profits*, which might save them from their frequent degradation in society. That act of Anne which confers on them some right of property, acknowledges that works of learned men have been carried on "too often to the ruin of them and their families."

Hence we trace a literary calamity which the public endure in those "Authors by Profession," who, finding often too late in life that it is the worst profession, are not scrupulous to live by some means or other. "I must live," cried one of the brotherhood, shrugging his shoulders in his misery, and almost blushing for a libel he had just printed—"I do not see the necessity," was the dignified reply. Trade was certainly not the origin of authorship. Most of our great authors have written from a more impetuous impulse than that of a mechanic; urged by a loftier motive than that of humouring the popular taste, they have not lowered themselves by writing down to the public, but have raised the public to them. Untasked, they composed at propitious intervals; and feeling, not labour, was in their last, as in their first page.

When we became a reading people, books were to be suited to popular tastes, and then that trade was opened that leads

to the workhouse. A new race sprang up, that, like Ascham "spoke as the common people;" but would not, like Ascham "think as wise men." The founders of "Authors by Profession" appear as far back as in the Elizabethan age. Then there were some roguish wits, who taking advantage of the public humour, and yielding their principle to their pen lived to write, and wrote to live; loose livers and loose writers!—like Autolycus, they ran to the fair, with baskets of hasty manufactures, fit for clowns and maidens.*

Even then flourished the craft of authorship, and the mysteries of book-selling. Robert GREENE, the master-wit, wrote "The Art of Coney-catching," or Cheatery, in which he was an adept; he died of a surfeit of rhenish and pickled herrings at a fatal banquet of authors;—and left as his legacy among the 'Authors by Profession' "A groatsworth of wit, bought with a million of repentance." One died of another kind of surfeit. Another was assassinated in a brothel. But the list of the calamities of all these worthies have as great variety as those of the Seven Champions. Nor were the *stationers* or *book-venders*, as the publishers of books were first designated, at a fault in the mysteries of "coney-catching." Deceptive and vaunting title-pages were practised to such excess, that TOM NASH, an "Author by Profession," never fastidiously modest, blushed at the title of his "Pierce Pennilesse," which the publisher had flourished in the first edition like "a tedious mountebank." The booksellers forged great names to recommend their works, and passed off in currency their base metal stamped with a royal head. "It was a usual thing in those days," says honest Anthony Wood, "to set a great name to a book or books, by the sharking booksellers or snivelling writers, to get bread."

Such authors as these are unfortunate before they are criminal; they often tire out their youth before they discover that "Author by Profession" is a denomination ridiculously assumed for it is none! The first efforts of men of genius are

* An abundance of these amusing tracts eagerly bought up in their day, but which came in the following generation to the ballad-stalls, are in the present enshrined in the cabinets of the curious. Such are the revolutions of literature!

usually honourable ones; but too often they suffer that genius to be debased. Many who would have composed history have turned voluminous party-writers; many a noble satirist has become a hungry libeller. Men who are starved in society, hold to it but loosely. They are the children of Nemesis! they avenge themselves—and with the Satan of Milton they exclaim,

"Evil, be thou my good!"

Never were their feelings more vehemently echoed than by this Nash—the creature of genius, of famine, and despair. He lived indeed in the age of Elizabeth, but writes as if he had lived in our own. He proclaimed himself to the world as *Pierce Pennilesse*, and on a retrospect of his *literary life*, observes that he had "sat up late and rose early, contended with the cold, and conversed with scarcitie;" he says, "all my labours turned to losse,—I was despised and neglected, my paines not regarded, or slightly rewarded, and I myself, in prime of my best wit, laid open to povertie. Whereupon I accused my fortune, railed on my patrons, bit my pen, rent my papers, and raged."—And then comes the after-reflection, which so frequently provokes the anger of genius: "How many base men that wanted those parts I had, enjoyed content at will, and had wealth at command! I called to mind a cobbler that was worth five hundred pounds; an hostler that had built a goodly inn; a carman in a leather pilche that had whipt a thousand pound out of his horses tail—and have I more than these? thought I to myself; am I better born? am I better brought up? yea, and better favoured! and yet am I a beggar? How am I crost, and whence is this curse? Even from hence, the men that should employ such as I am, are enamoured of their own wits, though they be never so scurvie; that a scrivener is better paid than a scholar; and men of art must seek to live among cormorants, or be kept under by dunces, who count it policy to keep them bare to follow their books the better." And then, Nash thus utters the cries of—

A DESPAIRING AUTHOR!

"Why is't damnation to despair and die
When life is my true happiness' disease?
My soul! my soul! thy safety makes me fly
The faulty means that might my pain appease;

Divines and dying men may talk of hell;
But in my heart her several torments dwell.

Ah worthless wit, to train me to this woe?
Deceitful arts that nourish discontent!
I'll thrive the folly that bewitch'd me so!
Vain thoughts, adieu! for now I will repent;
And yet my wants persuade me to proceed,
Since none take pity of a scholar's need!—

Forgive me, God, although I curse my birth,
And ban the air wherein I breathe a wretch!
For misery hath daunted all my mirth—
Without redress complains my careless verse,
And Midas' ears relent not at my moan!
In some far land will I my griefs rehearse,
'Mongst them that will be moved when I shall groan!
England, adieu! the soil that brought me forth!
Adieu, unkinde! where skill is nothing worth!"

Such was the miserable cry of an "Author by Profession" in the reign of Elizabeth. Nash not only renounces his country in his despair—and hesitates on "the faulty means" which have appeased the pangs of many of his unhappy brothers, but he proves also the weakness of the moral principle among these men of genius: for he promises, if any Mæcenas will bind him by his bounty, he will do him "as much honour as any poet of my beardless years in England—but," he adds, "if he be sent away with a flea in his ear, let him look that I will rail on him soundly; not for an hour or a day, while the injury is fresh in my memory, but in some elaborate polished poem, which I will leave to the world when I am dead, to be a living image to times to come of his beggarly parsimony." Poets might imagine that CHATTERTON had written all this, about the time he struck a balance of his profit and loss by the death of Beckford the Lord Mayor, in which he concludes with "am glad he is dead by 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*"*

* Chatterton had written a political essay for "The North Briton," which opened with the preluding flourish of "A spirited people freeing themselves from insupportable slavery:" it was, however, though ac-

A MENDICANT AUTHOR,

AND THE PATRONS OF FORMER TIMES.

It must be confessed, that before "Authors by Profession" had fallen into the hands of the booksellers, they endured peculiar grievances. They were pitiable retainers of some great family. The miseries of such an author, and the insolence and penuriousness of his patrons, who would not return the poetry they liked and would not pay for, may be traced in the eventful life of Thomas Churchyard, a poet of the age of Elizabeth, one of those unfortunate men who have written poetry all their days, and lived a long life, to complete the misfortune. His muse was so fertile, that his works pass all enumeration. He courted numerous patrons, who valued the poetry, while they left the poet to his own miserable contemplations. In a long catalogue of his works, which this poet has himself given, he adds a few memoranda, as he proceeds, a little ludicrous, but very melancholy. He wrote a book which he could never afterwards recover from one of his patrons, and adds, "all which book was in as good verse as ever I made; an honourable knight dwelling in the Black Friers can witness the same, because I read it unto him." Another accorded him the same remuneration—on which he adds, "An infinite number of other songs and sonnets given where they cannot be recovered, nor purchase any favour when they are craved." Still, however, he announces "twelve long tales for Christmas, dedicated to twelve honourable Lords." Well might Churchyard write

cepted, not printed, on account of the Lord Mayor's death. The patriot thus calculated the death of his great patron!

			£	s.	d.
Lost by his death in this Essay			1	11	6
Gained in Elegies	£2	2			
——— in Essays	3	3			
			5	5	0
Am glad he is dead by			£3	13	6

his own sad life, under the title of "The tragicall Discours of the haplesse Man's Life."

It will not be easy to parallel this pathetic description o the wretched age of a poor neglected poet mourning over youth vainly spent.

"High time it is to haste my carcase hence:
Youth stole away and felt no kind of joy,
And age he left in travail ever since;
The wanton days that made me nice and coy
Were but a dream, a shadow, and a toy—

"I look in glass, and find my cheeks so lean
That every hour I do but wish me dead;
Now back bends down, and forwards falls the head,
And hollow eyes in wrinkled brow doth shroud
As though two stars were creeping under cloud.

The lips wax cold and look both pale and thin,
The teeth falls out as nuts forsook the shell,
The bare bald head but shows where hair hath been,
The lively joints wax weary, stiff, and still,
The ready tongue now falters in his tale;
The courage quails as strength decays and goes. . . .

The thatcher hath a cottage poor you see:
The shepherd knows where he shall sleep at night;
The daily drudge from cares can quiet be:
Thus fortune sends some rest to every wight;
And I was born to house and land by right. . . .

Well ere my breath my body do forsake
My spirit I bequeath to God above;
My books, my scrawls, and songs that I did make,
I leave with friends, that freely did me love. . . .

Now, friends, shake hands, I must be gone, my boys!
Our mirth takes end, our triumph all is done;
Our tickling talk, our sports and merry toys
Do glide away like shadow of the sun.
Another comes when I my race have run,
Shall pass the time with you in better plight,
And find good cause of greater things to write."

Yet Churchyard was no contemptible bard; he compos a national poem, "the Worthiness of Wales," which h been reprinted, and will be still dear to his "Father-land,"

the Hollanders expressively denote their natal spot. He wrote, in "The Mirrour of Magistrates," the life of Wolsey, which has parts of great dignity; and the life of Jane Shore, which was much noticed in his day, for a severe critic of the times writes:

> "Hath not Shore's wife, although a light-skirt she,
> Given him a chaste, long, lasting memorie?"

Churchyard and the miseries of his poetical life are alluded to by Spenser. He is old Palemon in "Colin Clout's come home again." Spenser is supposed to describe this laborious writer for half a century, whose melancholy pipe, in his old age, may make the reader "rew:"

> "Yet he himself may rewed be more right,
> That sung so long untill quite hoarse he grew."

His epitaph, preserved by Camden, is extremely instructive to all poets, could epitaphs instruct them:—

> "*Poverty* and *poetry* his tomb doth inclose,
> Wherefore, good neighbours, be merry in *prose*."

It appears also by a confession of Tom Nash, that an author would then, pressed by the *res angusta domi*, when "the bottom of his purse was turned upward," submit to compose pieces for gentlemen who aspired to authorship. He tells us on some occasion that he was then in the country composing poetry for some country squire;—and says, "I am faine to let my plow stand still in the midst of a furrow, to follow these senior Fantasticos, to whose amorous *villanellas** I prostitute my pen," and this, too, "twice or thrice in a month;" and he complains that it is "poverty which alone maketh me so unconstant to my determined studies, trudging from place to place to and fro, and prosecuting the means to keep me from idlenesse." An author was then much like a vagrant.

Even at a later period, in the reign of the literary James, great authors were reduced to a state of mendicity, and lived on alms, although their lives and their fortunes had been consumed in forming national labours. The antiquary Stowe

* *Villenellas*, or rather "*Villanescas*, are properly country rustic songs, but commonly taken for ingenious ones made in imitation of them."—Pineda.

exhibits a striking example of the rewards conferred on such valued authors. Stowe had devoted his life, and exhausted his patrimony, in the study of English antiquities; he had travelled on foot throughout the kingdom, inspecting all monuments of antiquity, and rescuing what he could from the dispersed libraries of the monasteries. His stupendous collections, in his own hand-writing, still exist, to provoke the feeble industry of literary loiterers. He felt through life the enthusiasm of study; and seated in his monkish library, living with the dead more than with the living, he was still a student of taste: for Spenser the poet visited the library of Stowe; and the first good edition of Chaucer was made so chiefly by the labours of our author. Late in life, worn out with study and the cares of poverty, neglected by that proud metropolis of which he had been the historian, his good-humour did not desert him; for being afflicted with sharp pains in his aged feet, he observed that "his affliction lay in that part which formerly he had made so much use of." Many a mile had he wandered and much had he expended, for those treasures of antiquities which had exhausted his fortune, and with which he had formed works of great public utility. It was in his eightieth year that Stowe at length received a public acknowledgment of his services, which will appear to us of a very extraordinary nature. He was so reduced in his circumstances that he petitioned James I. for a *license to collect alms* for himself! "as a recompense for his labour and travel of *forty-five years*, in setting forth the *Chronicles of England*, and *eight years* taken up in the *Survey of the cities of London and Westminster*, towards his relief now in his old age; having left his former means of living, and only employing himself for the service and good of his country." Letters patent under the great seal were granted. After no penurious commendation of Stowe's labours, he is permitted "to gather the benevolence of well-disposed people within this realm of England: to ask, gather, and take the alms of all our loving subjects." These letters-patent were to be published by the clergy from their pulpit; they produced so little that they were renewed for another twelvemonth: one entire parish in the city contributed seven shillings and sixpence! Such then

was the patronage received by Stowe, to be a licensed beggar throughout the kingdom for one twelvemonth! Such was the public remuneration of a man who had been useful to his nation, but not to himself!

Such was the first age of *Patronage*, which branched out in the last century into an age of *Subscriptions*, when an author levied contributions before his work appeared; á mode which inundated our literature with a great portion of its worthless volumes: of these the most remarkable are the splendid publications of Richard Blome; they may be called fictitious works; for they are only mutilated transcripts from Camden and Speed, but richly ornamented, and pompously printed, which this literary adventurer, said to have been a gentleman, loaded the world with, by the aid of his subscribers. Another age was that of *Dedications*,* when the author was to lift his tiny patron to the skies, in an inverse ratio as he lowered himself, in this public exhibition. Sometimes the party haggled about the price;† or the statue, while stepping into his niche, would turn round on the author to assist his invention. A patron of Peter Motteux, dissatisfied with Peter's colder temperament, composed the superlative dedication to himself, and completed the misery of the author by subscribing it with Motteux's name!‡ Worse fared it when

* This practice of dedications had indeed flourished before; for authors had even prefixed numerous dedications to the same work, or dedicated to different patrons, the separate divisions. Fuller's "Church History" is disgraced by the introduction of twelve title-pages, besides the general one; with as many particular dedications, and no less than fifty or sixty inscriptions, addressed to benefactors; for which he is severely censured by Heylin. It was an expedient to procure dedication fees; for publishing books by *subscription* was an art not then discovered.

† The price of the dedication of a play was even fixed, from five to ten guineas, from the Revolution to the time of George I.; when it rose to twenty—but sometimes a bargain was to be struck—when the author and the play were alike indifferent. Even on these terms could vanity be gratified with the coarse luxury of panegyric, of which every one knew the price.

‡ This circumstance was so notorious at the time, that it occasioned a poetical satire in a dialogue between Motteux and his patron Henningham—preserved in that vast flower-bed or dunghill, for it is both, of

authors were the unlucky hawkers of their own works; of which I shall give a remarkable instance in MYLES DAVIES, a learned man maddened by want and indignation.

The subject before us exhibits one of the most singular spectacles in these volumes; that of a scholar of extensive erudition, whose life seems to have passed in the study of languages and the sciences, while his faculties appear to have been disordered from the simplicity of his nature, and driven to madness by indigence and insult. He formed the wild resolution of becoming a mendicant author, the hawker of his own works; and by this mode endured all the aggravated sufferings, the great and the petty insults of all ranks of society, and even sometimes from men of learning themselves, who denied a mendicant author the sympathy of a brother.

MYLES DAVIES and his works are imperfectly known to the most curious of our literary collectors. His name has scarcely reached a few; the author and his works are equally extraordinary, and claim a right to be preserved in this treatise on the Calamities of Authors.

Our author commenced printing a work, difficult, from its miscellaneous character, to describe; of which the volumes appeared at different periods. The early and the most valuable volumes were the first and second; they are a kind of

"Poems on Affairs of State," vol. ii. 251. The patron, in his zeal to omit no possible distinction that could attach to him, had given one circumstance which no one but himself could have known, and which he thus regrets:

"PATRON.

I must confess I was to blame
That one particular to name;
The rest could never have been known,
I made the style so like thy own.

POET.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for that!

PATRON.

Why d——e what would you be at?
I writ below myself, you sot!
Avoiding figures, tropes, what not;
For fear I should my fancy *raise*,
Above the level of thy plays!"

bibliographical, biographical, and critical work, on English Authors. They all bear a general title of "Athenæ Britannicæ."*

Collectors have sometimes met with a very curious volume, entitled "Icon Libellorum," and sometimes the same book, under another title,—"A Critical History of Pamphlets." This rare book forms the first volume of the "Athenæ Britannicæ." The author was Myles Davies, whose biography is quite unknown: he may now be his own biographer. He was a Welsh clergyman, a vehement foe to Popery, Arianism, and Socinianism, of the most fervent loyalty to George I. and the Hanoverian succession; a scholar, skilled in Greek and Latin, and in all the modern languages. Quitting his native spot with political disgust, he changed his character in the metropolis, for he subscribes himself "Counsellor-at-Law." In an evil hour he commenced author, not only surrounded by his books, but with the more urgent companions of a wife and family; and with that childlike simplicity which sometimes marks the mind of a retired scholar, we perceive him imagining that his immense reading would prove a source, not easily exhausted, for their subsistence.

From the first volumes of his series much curious literary

* "*Athenæ Britannicæ*, or a Critical History of the Oxford and Cambridge Writers and Writings, with those of the Dissenters and Romanists as well as other Authors and Worthies, both Domestic and Foreign, both Ancient and Modern. Together with an occasional freedom of thought, in criticising and comparing the parallel qualifications of the most eminent authors and their performances, both in MS. and print, both at home and abroad. By M. D. London, 1716." On the first volume of this series Dr. Farmer, a bloodhound of unfailing scent in curious and obscure English books, has written on the leaf "This is the only copy I have met with." Even the great bibliographer, Baker, of Cambridge, never met with but three volumes (the edition at the British Museum is in seven) sent him as a great curiosity by the Earl of Oxford, and now deposited in his collection at St. John's College. Baker has written this memorandum in the first volume: "Few copies were printed, so the work is become scarce, and for that reason will be valued. The book in the greatest part is borrowed from modern historians, but yet contains some things more uncommon, and not easily to be met with." How superlatively rare must be the English volumes which the eyes of Farmer and Baker never lighted on!

history may be extracted, amidst the loose and wandering elements of this literary chaos. In his dedication to the Prince he professes to "represent writers and writings in a catoptrick view."

The preface to the second volume opens his plan; and nothing as yet indicates those rambling humours which his subsequent labours exhibit.

As he proceeded in forming these volumes, I suspect, either that his mind became a little disordered, or that he discovered that mere literature found but penurious patrons in "the Few;" for, attempting to gain over all classes of society, he varied his investigations, and courted attention, by writing on law, physic, divinity, as well as literary topics. By his account—

"The avarice of booksellers, and the stinginess of hard-hearted patrons, had driven him into a cursed company of door-keeping herds, to meet the irrational brutality of those uneducated mischievous animals called footmen, house-porters, poetasters, mumpers, apothecaries, attorneys, and such-like beasts of prey," who were, like himself, sometimes barred up for hours in the menagerie of a great man's antechamber. In his addresses to Drs. Mead and Freind, he declares —"My misfortunes drive me to publish my writings for a poor livelihood; and nothing but the utmost necessity could make any man in his senses to endeavour at it, in a method so burthensome to the modesty and education of a scholar."

In French he dedicates to George I.; and in the Harleian MSS. I discovered a long letter to the Earl of Oxford, by our author, in French, with a Latin ode. Never was more innocent bribery proffered to a minister! He composed what he calls *Stricturæ Pindaricæ* on the "Mughouses," then political clubs; celebrates English authors in the same odes, and inserts a political Latin drama, called "Pallas Anglicana." Mævius and Bavius were never more indefatigable! The author's intellect gradually discovers its confusion amidst the loud cries of penury and despair.

To paint the distresses of an author soliciting alms for a book which he presents—and which, whatever may be its value, comes at least as an evidence that the suppliant is a

learned man, is a case so uncommon, that the invention of the novelist seems necessary to fill up the picture. But Myles Davies is an artist, in his own simple narrative.

Our author has given the names of several of his unwilling customers :—

"Those squeeze-farthing and hoard-penny ignoramus doctors, with several great personages who formed excuses for not accepting my books; or they would receive them, but give nothing for them; or else deny they had them, or remembered anything of them; and so gave me nothing for my last present of books, though they kept them *gratis et ingratiis*.

"But his grace of the Dutch extraction in Holland (said to be akin to Mynheer Vander B—nk) had a peculiar grace in receiving my present of books and odes, which, being bundled up together with a letter and ode upon his graceship, and carried in by his porter, I was bid to call for an answer five years hence. I asked the porter what he meant by that? I suppose, said he, four or five days hence—but it proved five or six months after, before I could get any answer, though I had writ five or six letters in French with fresh odes upon his graceship, and an account where I lived, and what noblemen had accepted of my present. I attended about the door three or four times a week all that time constantly from twelve to four or five o'clock in the evening; and walking under the fore windows of the parlours, once that time his and her grace came after dinner to stare at me, with open windows and shut mouths, but filled with fair water, which they spouted with so much dexterity that they twisted the water through their teeth and mouth-screw, to flash near my face, and yet just to miss me, though my nose could not well miss the natural flavour of the orange-water showering so very near me. Her grace began the water-work, but not very gracefully, especially for an English lady of her description, airs, and qualities, to make a stranger her spitting-post, who had been guilty of no other offence than to offer her husband some writings.—His grace followed, yet first stood looking so wistfully towards me, that I verily thought he had a mind to throw me a guinea or two for all these indignities, and two or three

months' then sleeveless waiting upon him—and accordingly I advanced to address his grace to remember the poor author, but, instead of an answer, he immediately undams his mouth, out fly whole showers of lymphatic rockets, which had like to have put out my mortal eyes."

Still he was not disheartened, and still applied for his bundle of books, which were returned to him at length unopened, with "half a guinea upon top of the cargo," and "with a desire to receive no more. I plucked up courage, murmuring within myself—

"Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito."

He sarcastically observes,

"As I was still jogging on homewards, I thought that a great many were called *their Graces*, not for any grace or favour they had truly deserved with God or man, but for the same reason of contraries, that the *Parcæ* or Destinies, were so called, because they spared none, or were not truly the *Parcæ, quia non parcebant.*"

Our indigent and indignant author, by the faithfulness of his representations, mingles with his anger some ludicrous scenes of literary mendicity.

"I can't choose (now I am upon the fatal subject) but make one observation or two more upon the various rencontres and adventures I met withall, in presenting my books to those who were likely to accept of them for their own information, or for that of helping a poor scholar, or for their own vanity or ostentation.

"Some persons would hollow to raise the whole house and posse of the domestics to raise a poor *crown;* at last all that flutter ends in sending Jack or Tom out to change a guinea, and then 't is reckoned over half-a-dozen times before the fatal crown can be picked out, which must be taken as it is given, with all the parade of almsgiving, and so to be received with all the active and passive ceremonial of mendication and alms-receiving—as if the books, printing and paper, were worth nothing at all, and as if it were the greatest charity for them to touch them or let them be in the house; 'For I shall never read them,' says one of the five-shilling-piece-chaps—'I have

no time too look in them,' says another;—'T is so much money lost,' says a grave dean;—'My eyes being so bad,' said a bishop, 'that I can scarce read at all.'—'What do you want with me?' said another; 'Sir, I presented you the other day with my *Athenæ Britanicæ*, being the last part published.'—'I don't want books, take them again; I don't understand what they mean.' 'The title is very plain,' said I, 'and they are writ mostly in English.' 'I'll give you a crown for both the volumes.' 'They stand me, sir, in more than that, and 't is for a bare subsistence I present or sell them; how shall I live?' 'I care not a farthing for that, live or die, 't is all one to me.'—'Damn my master!' said Jack, 't was but last night he was commending your books and your learning to the skies; and now he would not care if you were starving before his eyes; nay, he often makes game at your clothes, though he thinks you the greatest scholar in England.'"

Such was the life of a learned mendicant author! The scenes which are here exhibited appear to have disordered an intellect which had never been firm; in vain our author attempted to adapt his talents to all orders of men, still "To the crazy ship, all winds are contrary."

COWLEY.

OF HIS MELANCHOLY.

The mind of Cowley was beautiful, but a querulous tenderness in his nature breathes not only through his works, but influenced his habits and his views of human affairs. His temper and his genius would have opened to us, had not the strange decision of Sprat and Clifford withdrawn that full correspondence of his heart which he had carried on many years. These letters were suppressed because, as Bishop Sprat acknowledges, "in this kind of prose Mr. Cowley was excellent! They had a domestical plainness, and a peculiar kind of familiarity." And then the florid writer runs off, that, "in letters, where the souls of men should appear undressed, in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or

two in a chamber, but not to go abroad into the streets." A false criticism: which not only has proved to be so since their time by Mason's "Memoirs of Gray," but which these friends of Cowley might have themselves perceived, if they had recollected that the Letters of Cicero to Atticus form the most delightful chronicles of the heart—and the most authentic memorials of the man. Peck obtained one letter of Cowley's, preserved by Johnson, and it exhibits a remarkable picture of the miseries of his poetical solitude. It is, perhaps, not too late to inquire, whether this correspondence was destroyed as well as suppressed? Would Sprat and Clifford have burned what they have told us they so much admired? *

* My researches could never obtain more than one letter of Cowley's —it is but an elegant trifle—returning thanks to his friend Evelyn, for some seeds and plants, "The Garden" of Evelyn is immortalised in a delightful Ode of Cowley's, as well as by Evelyn himself. Even in this small note, we may discover the touch of Cowley. The original is in Astle's collection.

MR. ABRAHAM COWLEY TO JOHN EVELYN, ESQ.

"Sir, *Barn Elms, March* 23, 1663.

"There is nothing more pleasant than to see kindness in a person, for whom we have great esteem and respect: no, not the sight of your garden in May, or even the having such a one; which makes me more obliged to return you my most humble thanks for the testimonies I have lately received of you, both by your letter and your presents. I have already sowed such of your seeds as I thought most proper, upon a hot-bed; but cannot find in all my books a catalogue of these plants which require that culture, nor of such as must be set in pots; which defects, and all others, I hope shortly to see supplied, as I hope shortly to see your work of Horticulture finished and published; and long to be in all things your disciple, as I am in all things now,

Sir, Your most humble,
and most obedient Servant,
A. Cowley."

Such were the ordinary letters which passed between two men whom it would be difficult to parallel, for their elegant tastes and gentle dispositions. Evelyn's beautiful retreat at Sayes Court at Deptford is described by a contemporary as "a garden exquisite and most boscaresque, and, as it were, an exemplar of his book of Forest-trees." It was the entertainment and wonder of the greatest men of those times, and inspired the following lines of Cowley, to Evelyn and his Lady, who excelled in

Fortunately for our literary sympathy, the fatal error of these fastidious critics has been in some degree repaired by the admirable genius himself whom they have injured. When Cowley retreated from society, he determined to draw up an apology for his conduct, and to have dedicated it to his patron, Lord St. Albans. His death interrupted the entire design; but his Essays, which Pope so finely calls "the language of his heart," are evidently parts of these precious Confessions. All of Cowley's tenderest and undisguised feelings have therefore not perished. These Essays now form a species of composition in our language, a mixture of prose and verse —the man with the poet—the self-painter has sat to himself, and, with the utmost simplicity, has copied out the image of his soul.

Why has this poet twice called himself *the melancholy Cowley?* He employed no poetical *cheville** for the metre of a verse which his own feelings inspired.

Cowley, at the beginning of the civil war, joined the royalists at Oxford; followed the queen to Paris; yielded his days and his nights to an employment of the highest confidence, that of deciphering the royal correspondence; he transacted their business, and, almost divorcing himself from his neglected muse, he yielded up for them the tranquillity so necessary to the existence of a poet. From his earliest days he tells us how the poetic affections had stamped themselves on his heart, "like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which, with the tree, will grow proportionably."

the arts her husband loved; for she designed the frontispiece to his version of Lucretius—

> "In books and gardens thou hast placed aright
> (Things well which thou dost understand,
> And both dost make with thy laborious hand)
> Thy noble innocent delight;
> And in thy virtuous wife, where thou again dost meet
> Both pleasures more refined and sweet;
> The fairest garden in her looks,
> And in her mind the wisest books."

* A term the French apply to those *botches* which bad poets use to make out their metre.

He describes his feelings at the court.—

"I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life the nearer I came to it—that beauty which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw it was adulterate. I met with several great persons whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired. I was in a crowd of good company, in business of great and honourable trust; I ate at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences that ought to be desired by a man of my condition: yet I could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish, in a copy of verses to the same effect:—

> "Well then! I now do plainly see,
> This busie world and I shall ne'er agree!"

After several years' absence from his native country, at a most critical period, he was sent over to mix with that trusty band of loyalists, who, in secrecy and in silence, were devoting themselves to the royal cause. Cowley was seized on by the ruling powers. At this moment he published a preface to his works, which some of his party interpreted as a relaxation of his loyalty. He has been fully defended. Cowley, with all his delicacy of temper, wished sincerely to retire from all parties; and saw enough among the fiery zealots of his own, to grow disgusted even with royalists.

His wish for retirement has been half censured as cowardice, by Johnson; but there was a tenderness of feeling which had ill formed Cowley for the cunning of party intriguers, and the company of little villains. About this time he might have truly distinguished himself as "The melancholy Cowley."

I am only tracing his literary history for the purpose of this work; but I cannot pass without noticing the fact, that this abused man, whom his enemies were calumniating, was at this moment, under the disguise of a doctor of physic, occupied by the novel studies of botany and medicine; and as all science in the mind of the poet naturally becomes poetry, he composed his books on plants in Latin verse.

At length came the Restoration, which the poet zealously celebrated in his "Ode" on that occasion. Both Charles the First and Second had promised to reward his fidelity with the mastership of the Savoy; but, Wood says, "he lost it by certain persons, enemies of the muses." Wood has said no more; and none of Cowley's biographers have thrown any light on the circumstance: perhaps we may discover this literary calamity.

That Cowley caught no warmth from that promised sunshine which the new monarch was to scatter in prodigal gaiety, has been distinctly told by the poet himself; his muse, in "The Complaint," having reproached him thus:—

> "Thou young prodigal, who didst so loosely waste
> Of all thy youthful years, the good estate—
> Thou changeling then, bewitch'd with noise and show,
> Wouldst into courts and cities from me go—
> Go, renegado, cast up thy account—
> Behold the public storm is spent at last;
> The sovereign is toss'd at sea no more,
> And thou, with all the noble company,
> Art got at last to shore—
> But whilst thy fellow-voyagers I see,
> All march'd up to possess the promised land;
> Thou still alone (alas!) dost gaping stand
> Upon the naked beach, upon the barren sand."

But neglect was not all Cowley had to endure; the royal party seemed disposed to calumniate him. When Cowley was young he had hastily composed the comedy of "The Guardian;" a piece which served the cause of loyalty. After the Restoration, he rewrote it under the title of "Cutter of Coleman Street;" a comedy which may still be read with equal curiosity and interest: a spirited picture of the peculiar characters which appeared at the Revolution. It was not only ill received by a faction, but by those vermin of a new court, who, without merit themselves, put in their claims, by crying down those who, with great merit, are not in favour. All these to a man accused the author of having written a satire against the king's party. And this wretched party prevailed, too long for the author's repose, but not for his fame. Many years afterwards this comedy became pop-

ular. Dryden, who was present at the representation, tells us, that Cowley "received the news of his ill success not with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man." Cowley was in truth a great man, and a greatly injured man. His sensibility and delicacy of temper were of another texture than Dryden's. What at that moment did Cowley experience, when he beheld himself neglected, calumniated, and, in his last appeal to public favour, found himself still a victim to a vile faction; who, to court their common master, were trampling on their honest brother?

We shall find an unbroken chain of evidence, clearly demonstrating the agony of his literary feelings. The cynical Wood tells us, that, "not finding that preferment he expected, while others for their money carried away most places, he retired discontented into Surrey." And his panegyrist, Sprat, describes him as "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition—he had been perplexed with a long compliance with foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court, which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. These were the reasons that moved him to follow the violent inclinations of his own mind," &c. I doubt if either the sarcastic antiquary or the rhetorical panegyrist have developed the simple truth of Cowley's "violent inclination of his own mind." He does it himself more openly in that beautiful picture of an injured poet, in "The Complaint," an ode warm with individual feeling, but which Johnson coldly passes over, by telling us that "it met the usual fortune of complaints, and seems to have excited more contempt than pity."

Thus the biographers of Cowley hath told us nothing, and the poet himself hath probably not told us all. To these calumnies respecting Cowley's comedy, raised up by those whom Wood designates as "enemies of the muses," it would appear that others were added of a deeper dye, and in malignant whispers distilled into the ear of royalty. Cowley, in an ode, had commemorated the genius of Brutus, with all the enthusiasm of a votary of liberty. After the king's return, when Cowley solicited some reward for his sufferings and services in the royal cause, the chancellor is said to have turn-

ed on him with a severe countenance, saying, "Mr. Cowley, your pardon is your reward!" It seems that the ode was then considered to be of a dangerous tendency among half the nation; Brutus would be the model of enthusiasts, who were sullenly bending their neck under the yoke of royalty. Charles II. feared the attempt of desperate men; and he might have forgiven Rochester a loose pasquinade, but not Cowley a solemn invocation. This fact then is said to have been the true cause of the despondence so prevalent in the latter poetry of "the melancholy Cowley." And hence the indiscretion of the muse, in a single flight, condemned her to a painful, rather than a voluntary solitude; and made the poet complain of "barren praise" and "neglected verse."*

While this anecdote harmonizes with better known facts, it throws some light on the outcry raised against the comedy, which seems to have been but an echo of some preceding one. Cowley retreated into solitude, where he found none of the agrestic charms of the landscapes of his muse. When in the world, Sprat says, "he had never wanted for constant health and strength of body;" but, thrown into solitude, he carried with him a wounded spirit—the Ode of Brutus and the condemnation of his comedy were the dark spirits that haunted his cottage. Ill health soon succeeded low spirits—he pined in dejection, and perished a victim of the finest and most injured feelings.

But before we leave *the melancholy Cowley*, he shall speak the feelings, which here are not exaggerated. In this Chronicle of Literary Calamity, no passage ought to be more memorable than the solemn confession of one of the most amiable of men and poets.

Thus he expresses himself in the preface to his "Cutter of Coleman Street:"

"We are, therefore, wonderful wise men, and have a fine business of it; we, who spend our time in poetry. I do sometimes laugh, and am often angry with myself, when I think on it; and if I had a son inclined by nature to the same folly,

* The anecdote, probably little known, may be found in "the Judgment of Dr. Prideaux in condemning the murder of Julius Cæsar by the conspirators as a most villanous act, maintained, 1721," p. 41.

I believe I should bind him from it by the strictest conjurations of a paternal blessing. For what can be more ridiculous than to labour to give men delight, whilst they labour, on their part, most earnestly, to take offence!"

And thus he closes the preface, in all the solemn expression of injured feelings:—"This I do affirm, that *from all which I have written*, I never *received the least benefit, or the least advantage; but, on the contrary, have felt sometimes the effects of malice and misfortune!*"

Cowley's ashes were deposited between those of Chaucer and Spenser; a marble monument was erected by a duke; and his eulogy was pronounced, on the day of his death, from the lips of royalty. The learned wrote, and the tuneful wept; well might the neglected bard, in his retirement, compose an epitaph on himself, living there "entombed, though not dead."

To this ambiguous state of existence he applies a conceit, not inelegant, from the tenderness of its imagery:

"Hic sparge flores, sparge breves rosas,
Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus;
Herbisque odoratis corona
Vatis adhuc cinerem calentem."

IMITATED.

Here scatter flowers, and short-lived roses bring,
For life, though dead, enjoys the flowers of spring;
With breathing wreaths of fragrant herbs adorn
The yet warm embers in the poet's urn.

THE PAINS OF FASTIDIOUS EGOTISM.

I MUST place the author of "The Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," who himself now ornaments that roll, among those who have participated in the misfortunes of literature.

HORACE WALPOLE was the inheritor of a name the most popular in Europe; he moved in the higher circles of society; and fortune had never denied him the ample gratification of his lively tastes in the elegant arts, and in curious know-

ledge. These were particular advantages. But Horace Walpole panted with a secret desire for literary celebrity; a full sense of his distinguished rank long suppressed the desire of venturing the name he bore to the uncertain fame of an author, and the caprice of vulgar critics. At length he pretended to shun authors, and to slight the honours of authorship. The cause of this contempt has been attributed to the perpetual consideration of his rank. But was this bitter contempt of so early a date? Was Horace Walpole a Socrates before his time? was he born that prodigy of indifference, to despise the secret object he languished to possess? His early associates were not only noblemen, but literary noble men; and need he have been so petulantly fastidious at bearing the venerable title of author, when he saw Lyttleton, Chesterfield, and other peers, proud of wearing the blue riband of literature? No! it was after he had become an author that he contemned authorship; and it was not the precocity of his sagacity, but the maturity of his experience, that made him willing enough to undervalue literary honours, which were not sufficient to satisfy his desires.

Let us estimate the genius of Horace Walpole, by analyzing his talents, and inquiring into the nature of his works.

His taste was highly polished; his vivacity attained to brilliancy;* and his picturesque fancy, easily excited, was

* In his letters there are uncommon instances of vivacity, whenever pointed against authors. The following have not yet met the public eye. What can be more maliciously pungent than this on Spence? "As I knew Mr. J. Spence, I do not think I should have been so much delighted as Dr Kippis with reading his letters. He was a good-natured harmless little soul, but more like a silver penny than a genius. It was a neat fiddle faddle bit of sterling, that had read good books, and kept good company; but was too trifling for use, and only fit to please a child." —On Dr. Nash's first volume of 'Worcestershire;' "It is a folio of prodigious corpulence, and yet dry enough; but it is finely dressed with many heads and views." He characterizes Pennant; "*He* is not one of our plodders (alluding to Gough); rather the other extreme; his *corporal* spirits (for I cannot call them *animal*) do not allow him to digest anything. He gave a round jump from ornithology to antiquity, and, as if they had any relation, thought he understood everything that lay between them. The report of his being disordered is not true; he has been with

soon extinguished; his playful wit and keen irony were perpetually exercised in his observations on life, and his memory was stored with the most amusing knowledge, but much too lively to be accurate; for his studies were but his sports. But other qualities of genius must distinguish the great author, and even him who would occupy that leading rank in the literary republic our author aspired to fill. He lived too much in that class of society which is little favourable to genius; he exerted neither profound thinking, nor profound feeling; and too volatile to attain to the pathetic, that higher quality of genius, he was so imbued with the petty elegances of society, that every impression of grandeur in the human character was deadened in the breast of the polished cynic.

Horace Walpole was not a man of genius,—his most pleasing, if not his great talent, lay in letter writing; here he was without a rival;* but he probably divined, when he condescended to become an author, that something more was required than the talents he exactly possessed. In his latter days he felt this more sensibly, which will appear in those confessions which I have extracted from an unpublished correspondence.

Conscious of possessing the talent which amuses, yet feeling his deficient energies, he resolved to provide various sub-

me, and at least is as composed as ever I saw him." His literary correspondence with his friend Cole abounds with this easy satirical criticism—He delighted to ridicule authors!—as well as to starve the miserable artists he so grudgingly paid. In the very volumes he celebrated the arts, he disgraced them by his penuriousness; so that he loved to indulge his avarice at the expense of his vanity!

* This opinion on Walpole's talent for letter-writing was published in 1812, many years before the public had the present collection of his letters; my prediction has been amply verified. He wrote a great number to Bentley, the son of Dr. Bentley, who ornamented Gray's works with some extraordinary designs. Walpole, who was always proud and capricious, observes his friend Cole, broke with Bentley because he would bring his wife with him to Strawberry-hill. He then asked Bentley for all his letters back, but he would not in return give Bentley's own.

This whole correspondence abounded with literature, criticism, and wit, of the most original and brilliant composition. This is the opinion of no friend, but an admirer, and a good judge; for it was Bentley's own.

stitutes for genius itself; and to acquire reputation, if he could not grasp at celebrity. He raised a printing-press at his Gothic castle, by which means he rendered small editions of his works valuable from their rarity, and much talked of, because seldom seen. That this is true, appears from the following extract from his unpublished correspondence with a literary friend. It alludes to his "Anecdotes of Painting in England," of which the first edition only consisted of 300 copies.

"Of my new fourth volume I printed 600; but, as they can be had, I believe not a third part is sold. This is a very plain lesson to me, that my editions sell for their curiosity, and not for any merit in them—and so they would if I printed Mother Goose's Tales, and but a few. If I am humbled as an author, I may be vain as a printer; and when one has nothing else to be vain of, it is certainly very little worth while to be proud of that."

There is a distinction between the author of great connexions and the mere author. In the one case, the man may give a temporary existence to his books; but in the other, it is the book which gives existence to the man.

Walpole's writings seem to be constructed on a certain principle, by which he gave them a sudden, rather than a lasting existence. In historical research, our adventurer startled the world by maintaining paradoxes which attacked the opinions, or changed the characters, established for centuries. Singularity of opinion, vivacity of ridicule, and polished epigrams in prose, were the means by which Horace Walpole sought distinction.

In his works of imagination, he felt he could not trust to himself—the natural pathetic was utterly denied him. But he had fancy and ingenuity; he had recourse to the *marvellous* in imagination, on the principle he had adopted the *paradoxical* in history. Thus, "The Castle of Otranto," and "The Mysterious Mother," are the productions of ingenuity rather than genius: and display the miracles of art, rather than the spontaneous creations of nature.

All his literary works, like the ornamented edifice he inhabited, were constructed on the same artificial principle; an

old paper lodging-house, converted by the magician of taste into a Gothic castle, full of scenic effects.

"A Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," was itself a classification which only an idle amateur could have projected, and only the most agreeable narrator of anecdotes could have seasoned. These splendid scribblers are for the greater part no authors at all.*

His attack on our peerless Sidney, whose fame was more mature than his life, was formed on the same principle as his "Historic Doubts" on Richard III. Horace Walpole was as willing to vilify the truly great, as to beautify deformity, when he imagined that the fame he was destroying or conferring, reflected back on himself. All these works were plants of sickly delicacy, which could never endure the open air, and only lived in the artificial atmosphere of a private collection. —Yet at times the flowers, and the planter of the flowers, were roughly shaken by an uncivil breeze.

His "Anecdotes of Painting in England," is a most entertaining catalogue. He gives the feelings of the distinct eras with regard to the arts; yet his pride was never gratified when he reflected that he had been writing the work of Vertue, who had collected the materials, but could not have given the philosophy. His great age and his good sense opened his eyes on himself; and Horace Walpole seems to have judged

* Walpole's characters are not often to be relied on, witness his injustice to Hogarth as a painter, and his insolent calumny of Charles I. His literary opinions of James I. and of Sidney, might have been written without any acquaintance with the works he has so maliciously criticised. In his account of Sidney he had silently passed over the "Defence of Poetry;" and in his second edition has written this avowal that "he had forgotten it; a proof that I at least did not think it sufficient foundation for so high a character as he acquired." How heartless was the polished cynicism which could dare to hazard this false criticism! Nothing can be more imposing than his volatile and caustic criticism on the works of James I., yet he had probably never opened that folio he so poignantly ridicules. He doubts whether two pices "The Prince's Cabala," and "The Duty of a King in his Royal Office," were genuine productions of James I. The truth is that both these works are nothing more than extracts printed with those separate titles and drawn from the king's "Basilicon Doron." He had probably neither read the extracts nor the original.

too contemptuously of Horace Walpole. The truth is, he was mortified he had not and never could obtain, a literary peerage; and he never respected the commoner's seat. At these moments, too frequent in his life, he contemns authors, and returns to sink back into all the self-complacency of aristocratic indifference.

This cold unfeeling disposition for literary men, this disguised malice of envy, and this eternal vexation at his own disappointments,—break forth in his correspondence with one of those literary characters, with whom he kept on terms while they were kneeling to him in the humility of worship, or moved about to fetch or to carry his little quests of curiosity in town or country.*

The following literary confessions illustrate this character.

"*June*, 1778.

"I have taken a thorough dislike to being an author; and, if it would not look like begging you to compliment one by contradicting me, I would tell you what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled. And when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less sharp-sighted. *It is very natural;* mine were *spirits* rather than *parts;* and as time has rebated the one, it must surely destroy *their resemblance* to the other."

* It was such a person as Cole of Milton, his correspondent of forty years, who lived at a distance, and obsequious to his wishes, always looking up to him, though never with a parallel glance—with whom he did not quarrel, though if Walpole could have read the private notes *Cole* made in his MSS. at the time he was often writing the civilest letters of admiration,—even *Cole* would have been cashiered from his correspondence. *Walpole* could not endure equality in literary men.—Bentley observed to Cole, that Walpole's pride and hauteur were excessive; which betrayed themselves in the treatment of *Gray*, who had himself too much pride and spirit *to forgive it* when matters were made up between them, and Walpole invited Gray to Strawberry-hill. When *Gray* came, he without any ceremony told Walpole, that though he waited on him as civility required, yet by *no means would he ever be there on the terms of their former friendship, which he had totally cancelled.* —From Cole's MSS.

In another letter:—

"I set very little value on myself; as a man I am a very faulty one; and *as an author, a very middling one*, which *whoever thinks a comfortable rank, is not at all of my opinion.* Pray convince me that you think I mean sincerely, by not answering me with a compliment. It is very weak to be pleased with flattery; the stupidest of all delusions to beg it. From you I should take it ill. We have known one another almost forty years."

There were times when Horace Walpole's natural taste for his studies returned with all the vigour of passion—but his volatility, and his desultory life, perpetually scattered his firmest resolutions into air. This conflict appears beautifully described when the view of King's College, Cambridge, throws his mind into meditation; and the passion for study and seclusion instantly kindled his emotions, lasting, perhaps, as long as the letter which describes them occupied in writing.

"*May* 22, 1777.

"The beauty of King's College, Cambridge, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a monk in it. Though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation; still, books, antiquity, and virtue, kept hold of a corner of my heart: and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains—but it will not be my lot; and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought, and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very long way for preparing for it. If Charles V. had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good (his duty as a king,) there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life, but the virtue of it is merely negative; the innocence is beautiful."

There had been moments when Horace Walpole even expressed the tenderest feelings for fame; and the following

passage, written prior to the preceding ones, gives no indication of that contempt for literary fame, of which the close of this character will exhibit an extraordinary instance.

This letter relates an affecting event—he had just returned from seeing General Conway attacked by a paralytic stroke. Shocked by his appearence he writes—

"It is, perhaps, to vent my concern that I write. It has operated such a revolution on my mind, as no time, at *my age*, can efface. It has at once damped every pursuit which my spirits had even now prevented me from being weaned from, I mean of virtue. It is like a mortal distemper in myself; for can amusements amuse, if there is but a glimpse, a vision of outliving one's friends? *I have had dreams in which I thought I wished for fame—it was not certainly posthumous fame at any distance; I feel, I feel it was confined to the memory of those I love.* It seems to me impossible for a man who has no friends, to do anything for fame—and to me the first position in friendship is, to intend one's friends should survive one—but it is not reasonable to oppress you, who are suffering gout, with my melancholy ideas. What I have said will tell you, what I hope so many years have told you, that I am very constant and sincere to friends above forty years."

In a letter of a later date there is a remarkable confession, which harmonizes with those already given.

"My pursuits have always been light, trifling, and tended to nothing but my casual amusement. I will not say, without a little vain ambition of showing some parts, but never with industry sufficient to make me apply to anything solid. My studies, if they could be called so, and my productions were alike desultory. In my latter age I discovered the futility both of my objects and writings—I felt how insignificant is the reputation of an author of mediocrity; and that, being no genius, I only added one name more to a list of writers; but had told the world nothing but what it could as well be without. These reflections were the best proofs of my sense; and when I could see through my own vanity, there is less wonder in my discovering that such talents as I might have had, are impaired at seventy-two."

Thus humbled was Horace Walpole to himself!—there is an intellectual dignity which this man of wit and sense was incapable of reaching—and it seems a retribution, that the scorner of true greatness should at length feel the poisoned chalice return to his own lips. He who had contemned the eminent men of former times, and quarrelled with and ridiculed every contemporary genius; who had affected to laugh at the literary fame he could not obtain,—at length came to scorn himself! and endured the "penal fires" of an author's hell, in undervaluing his own works, the productions of a long life!

The chagrin and disappointment of such an author were never less carelessly concealed, than in the following extraordinary letter:—

HORACE WALPOLE TO ————

"*Arlington Street, April* 27, 1773.

"Mr. Gough wants to be introduced to me! Indeed! I would see him, as he has been midwife to Masters; but he is so dull that he would only be troublesome—and besides, you know I shun authors, and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at all these things, and write only to laugh at them and divert myself. None of us are authors of any consequence, and it is the most ridiculous of all vanities to be vain of being *mediocre*. A page in a great author humbles me to the dust, and the conversation of those that are not superior to myself, reminds me of what will be thought of myself. I blush to flatter them, or to be flattered by them; and should dread letters being published some time or other, in which they would relate our interviews, and we should appear like those puny conceited witlings in Shenstone's and Hughe's correspondence, who give themselves airs from being in possession of the soil of Parnassus for the time being; as peers are proud because they enjoy the estates of great men who went before them. Mr. Gough is very welcome to see Strawberry-hill, or I would

help him to any scraps in my possession that would assist his publications, though he is one of those industrious who are only re-burying the dead—but I cannot be acquainted with him; it is contrary to my system and my humour; and besides I know nothing of barrows and Danish entrenchments, and Saxon barbarisms and Phœnician characters—in short, I know nothing of those ages that knew nothing—then how should I be of use to modern literati? All the Scotch metaphysicians have sent me their works. I did not read one of them, because I do not understand what is not understood by those that write about it; and I did not get acquainted with one of the writers. I should like to be intimate with Mr. Anstey, even though he wrote Lord Buckhorse, or with the author of the Heroic Epistle—I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith, though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, till he changed it for words, and sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray.—Adieu!"

Such a letter seems not to have been written by a literary man—it is the babble of a thoughtless wit and a man of the world. But it is worthy of him whose contracted heart could never open to patronage or friendship. From such we might expect the unfeeling observation in the "Anecdotes of Painting," that "want of patronage is the apology for want of genius. Milton and La Fontaine did not write in the bask of court-favour. A poet or a painter may want an equipage or a villa, by wanting protection; they can always afford to buy ink and paper, colours and pencil. Mr. Hogarth has received no honours, but universal admiration." Patronage, indeed, cannot convert dull men into men of genius, but it may preserve men of genius from becoming dull men. It might have afforded Dryden that studious leisure which he ever wanted, and which would have given us not imperfect tragedies, and uncorrected poems, but the regulated flights of a noble genius. It might have animated Gainsborough to have created an English school in landscape, which I have heard from those who

knew him was his favourite yet neglected pursuit. But Walpole could insult that genius, which he wanted the generosity to protect!

The whole spirit of this man was penury. Enjoying an affluent income, he only appeared to patronize the arts which amused his tastes,—employing the meanest artists, at reduced prices, to ornament his own works, an economy which he bitterly reprehends in others who were compelled to practise it. He gratified his avarice at the expense of his vanity; the strongest passion must prevail. It was the simplicity of childhood in Chatterton, to imagine Horace Walpole could be a patron—but it is melancholy to record, that a slight protection might have saved such a youth. Gray abandoned this man of birth and rank, in the midst of their journey through Europe; Mason broke with him; even his humble correspondent Cole, this "friend of forty years," was often sent away in dudgeon; and he quarrelled with all the authors and artists he had ever been acquainted with. The Gothic castle at Strawberry-hill was rarely graced with living genius—there the greatest was Horace Walpole himself; but he had been too long waiting to see realized a magical vision of his hopes, which resembled the prophetic fiction of his own romance, that "the owner should grow too large for his house." After many years, having discovered that he still retained his mediocrity, he could never pardon the presence of that preternatural being whom the world considered a GREAT MAN.—Such was the feeling which dictated the close of the above letter; Johnson and Goldsmith were to be "scorned," since Pope and Gray were no more within the reach of his envy and his fear.

INFLUENCE OF A BAD TEMPER IN CRITICISM.

UNFRIENDLY to the literary character, some have imputed the brutality of certain authors to their literary habits, when it may be more truly said, that they derived their literature from their brutality. The spirit was envenomed before it entered

into the fierceness of literary controversy, and the insanity was in the evil temper of the man before he roused our notice by his ravings. Ritson, the late antiquary of poetry (not to call him poetical,) amazed the world by his vituperative railing at two authors of the finest taste in poetry, Warton and Percy; he carried criticism, as the discerning few had first surmised, to insanity itself; the character before us only approached it.

Dennis attained to the ambiguous honour of being distinguished as "The Critic," and he may yet instruct us how the moral influences the literary character, and how a certain talent that never can mature itself into genius, like the pale fruit that hangs in the shade, ripens only into sourness.

As a Critic, in his own day, party for some time kept him alive; the art of criticism was a novelty at that period of our literature. He flattered some great men, and he abused three of the greatest; this was one mode of securing popularity; because, by this contrivance, he divided the town into two parties; and the irascibility and satire of Pope and Swift were not less serviceable to him, than the partial panegyrics of Dryden and Congreve. Johnson revived him, for his minute attack on Addison; and Kippis, feebly voluminous, and with the cold affectation of candour, allows him to occupy a place in our literary history, too large in the eye of Truth and Taste.

Let us say all the good we can of him, that we may not be interrupted in a more important inquiry. Dennis once urged fair pretensions to the office of critic. Some of his "Original Letters," and particularly the "Remarks on Prince Arthur," written in his vigour, attain even to classical criticism.* Aristotle and Bossu lay open before him, and he developes and sometimes illustrates their principles, with close reasoning. Passion had not yet blinded the young critic with rage;

* It is curious to observe, that Kippis, who classifies with the pomp of enumeration his heap of pamphlets, imagines that, as Blackmore's Epic is consigned to oblivion, so likewise must be the criticism, which, however, he confesses he could never meet with. An odd fate attends Dennis's works: his criticism on a bad work ought to survive it, as good works have survived his criticisms.

and in that happy moment, Virgil occupied his attention even more than Blackmore.

The prominent feature in his literary character was good sense; but in literature, though not in life, good sense is a penurious virtue. Dennis could not be carried beyond the cold line of precedent, and before he ventured to be pleased, he was compelled to look into Aristotle. His learning was the bigotry of literature. It was ever Aristotle explained by Dennis. But in the explanation of the obscure text of his master, he was led into such frivolous distinctions, and tasteless propositions, that his works deserve inspection, as examples of the manner of a true mechanical critic.

This blunted feeling of the mechanical critic was at first concealed from the world in the pomp of critical erudition; but when he trusted to himself, and, destitute of taste and imagination, became a Poet and a Dramatist, the secret of the Royal Midas was revealed. As his evil temper prevailed, he forgot his learning, and lost the moderate sense which he seemed once to have possessed. Rage, malice, and dulness, were the heavy residuum; and now he much resembled that congenial soul whom the ever-witty South compared to the trailor's goose, which is at once hot and heavy.

Dennis was sent to Cambridge by his father, a saddler, who imagined a genius had been born in the family. He travelled in France and Italy, and on his return held in contempt every pursuit but poetry and criticism. He haunted the literary coteries, and dropped into a galaxy of wits and noblemen. At a time when our literature, like our politics, was divided into two factions, Dennis enlisted himself under Dryden and Congreve;* and as legitimate criticism was then an awful novelty in the nation, the young critic, recent

* See in Dennis's "Original Letters" one to Tonson, entitled, "On the conspiracy against the reputation of Mr. Dryden." It was in favour of *folly* against *wisdom*, *weakness* against *power*, &c.; *Pope* against *Dryden*. He closes with a well-turned period. "Wherever genius runs through a work, I forgive its faults; and wherever that is wanting, no beauties can touch me. Being struck by Mr. Dryden's genius, I have no eyes for his errors; and I have no eyes for his enemies' beauties, because I am not struck by their genius."

from the Stagirite, soon became an important, and even a tremendous spirit. Pope is said to have regarded his judgment, and Mallet, when young, tremblingly submitted a poem, to live or die by his breath. One would have imagined that the elegant studies he was cultivating, the views of life which had opened on him, and the polished circle around, would have influenced the grossness which was the natural growth of the soil. But ungracious Nature kept fast hold of the mind of Dennis!

His personal manners were characterized by their abrupt violence. Once dining with Lord Halifax he became so impatient of contradiction, that he rushed out of the room, overthrowing the side-board. Inquiring on the next day how he had behaved, Moyle observed, "You went away like the devil, taking one corner of the house with you." The wits, perhaps, then began to suspect their young Zolius's dogmatism.

The actors refused to perform one of his tragedies to empty houses, but they retained some excellent thunder which Dennis had invented; it rolled one night when Dennis was in the pit, and it was applauded! Suddenly starting up, he cried to the audience, "By G—, they won't act my tragedy, but they steal my thunder!" Thus, when reading Pope's "Essay on Criticism," he came to the character of Appius, he suddenly flung down the new poem, exclaiming, "By G—, he means me!" He is painted to the life.

> "*Lo! Appius reddens* at each word you speak,
> And stares tremendous with a threatening eye,
> Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry."

I complete this picture of Dennis with a very extraordinary caricature, which Steele, in one of his papers of "The Theatre," has given of Dennis. I shall, however, disentangle the threads, and pick out what I consider not to be caricature, but resemblance.

"His motion is quick and sudden, turning on all sides, with a suspicion of every object, as if he had done or feared some extraordinary mischief. You see wickedness in his meaning, but folly of countenance, that betrays him to be unfit for the execution of it. He starts, stares, and looks

round him. This constant shuffle of haste without speed, makes the man thought a little touched; but the vacant look of his two eyes gives you to understand, that he could never run out of his wits, which seemed not so much to be lost, as to want employment; they are not so much astray, as they are a wool-gathering. He has the face and surliness of a mastiff, which has often saved him from being treated like a cur, till some more sagacious than ordinary found his nature, and used him accordingly. Unhappy being! terrible without, fearful within! Not a wolf in sheep's clothing, but a sheep in a wolf's."

However anger may have a little coloured this portrait, its truth may be confirmed from a variety of sources. If Sallust, with his accustomed penetration, in characterizing the violent emotions of Catiline's restless mind, did not forget its indication in "his walk now quick and now slow," it may be allowed to think that the character of Dennis was alike to be detected in his habitual surliness.

Even in his old age, for our chain must not drop a link, his native brutality never forsook him. Thomson and Pope charitably supported the veteran Zoilus at a benefit play; and Savage, who had nothing but a verse to give, returned them very poetical thanks, in the name of Dennis. He was then blind and old, but his critical ferocity had no old age; his surliness overcame every grateful sense, and he swore as usual, "They could be no one's but that *fool* Savage's,"—an evidence of his sagacity and brutality! * This was, per-

* There is an epigram on Dennis by Savage, which Johnson has preserved in his life; and I feel it to be a very correct likeness, although Johnson censures Savage for writing an epigram against Dennis, while he was living in great familiarity with the critic. Perhaps that was the happiest moment to write the epigram. The anecdote in the text doubtless prompted "the fool" to take this fair revenge and just chastisement. Savage has brought out the features strongly in these touches:

"Say what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad.
On one so poor you cannot take the law,
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw.
Uncaged then, let the harmless monster rage,
Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age!"

haps, the last peevish snuff shaken from the dismal link of criticism; for, a few days after, was the redoubted Dennis numbered with the mighty dead.

He carried the same fierceness into his style, and commits the same ludicrous extravagancies in literary composition as in his manners. Was Pope really sore at the Zoilian style? He has himself spared me the trouble of exhibiting Dennis's gross personalities, by having collected them at the close of the Dunciad; specimens which show how low false wit and malignity can get to by hard pains. I will throw into the note a curious illustration of the anti-poetical notions of a mechanical critic, who has no wing to dip into the hues of the imagination.*

* Dennis points his heavy cannon of criticism, and thus bombards that aerial edifice, the "Rape of the Lock." He is inquiring into the nature of *poetical machinery*, which, he oracularly pronounces, should be religious, or allegorical, or political; asserting the "Lutrin" of Boileau to be a trifle only in appearance, covering the deep political design of reforming the Popish church!—With the yard of criticism, he takes measure of the slender graces and tiny elegance of Pope's aerial machines, as "less considerable than the *human persons*, which is *without precedent*. Nothing can be so contemptible as the *persons* or so foolish as the understandings of these *hobgoblins*. Ariel's speech is one continued impertinence. After he has talked to them of black omens and dire disasters that threaten his heroine, those bugbears dwindle to the breaking a piece of china, to staining a petticoat, the losing a fan, or a bottle of sal volatile—and what makes Ariel's speech more ridiculous, is the *place* where it is spoken, on the sails and cordage of Belinda's barge." And then he compares the Sylphs to the Discord of Homer, whose feet are upon the earth, and head in the skies. "They are, indeed, being so diminutive that they bear the same proportion to the rest of the intellectual, that *Eels in vinegar* do to the rest of the material world; the latter are only to be seen through microscopes, and the former only through the false optics of a Rosicrucian understanding." And finally, he decides that "these diminutive beings are only *Sawney* (that is, Alexander Pope), taking the change; for it is he, a little lump of flesh that talks, instead of a little spirit." Dennis's profound gravity contributes an additional feature of the burlesque to these heroi-comic poems themselves, only that Dennis cannot be playful, and will not be good humoured.

On the same tasteless principle he decides on the improbability of that incident in the "Conscious Lovers" of Steele, raised by Bevil, who having received great obligations from his father, has promised not

In life and in literature we meet with men who seem endowed with an obliquity of understanding, yet active and busy spirits; but as activity is only valuable in proportion to the capacity that puts all in motion, so, when ill directed, the intellect, warped by nature, only becomes more crooked and fantastical. A kind of frantic enthusiasm breaks forth in their actions and their language, and often they seem ferocious when they are only foolish. We may thus account for the manners and style of Dennis, pushed almost to the verge of insanity, and acting on him very much like insanity itself; a circumstance which the quick vengeance of wit seized on, in the humorous "Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris, concerning the Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis, an officer of the Custom-house."

It is curious to observe, that Dennis, in the definition of genius, describes himself; he says, "Genius is caused by a *furious joy* and *pride of soul* on the conception of an extraordinary hint. Many men have their *hints* without their motions of *fury and pride of soul*, because they want fire enough to agitate their spirits; and these we call cold writers. Others, who have a great deal of fire, but have not excellent organs, feel the forementioned *motions*, without the extraordinary *hints*, and these we call fustian writers." His *motions* and his *hints*, as he describes them, in regard to cold or fustian writers, seem to include the extreme points of his own genius.

Another feature strongly marks the race of the Dennises. With a half-consciousness of deficient genius, they usually idolize some chimera, by adopting some extravagant principle; and they consider themselves as original when they are only absurd.

to marry without his consent. On this Dennis, who rarely in his critical progress will stir a foot without authority, quotes four formidable pages from Locke's "Essay on Government," to prove that, at the age of discretion, a man is free to dispose of his own actions! One would imagine that Dennis was arguing like a special pleader, rather than developing the involved action of an affecting drama. Are there critics who would pronounce Dennis to be a very *sensible* brother? It is here too he calls Steele "a two-penny author," alluding to the price of the "Tatlers"—but this cost Dennis dear!

Dennis had ever some misshapen idol of the mind, which he was perpetually caressing with the zeal of perverted judgment or monstrous taste. Once his frenzy ran against the Italian Opera; and in his "Essay on Public Spirit," he ascribes its decline to its unmanly warblings. I have seen a long letter by Dennis to the Earl of Oxford, written to congratulate his lordship on his accession to power, and the high hopes of the nation; but the greater part of the letter runs on the Italian Opera, while Dennis instructs the Minister that the national prosperity can never be effected while this general corruption of the three kingdoms lies open!

Dennis has more than once recorded two material circumstances in the life of a true critic; these are his *ill-nature* and the *public neglect.*

"I make no doubt," says he, "that upon perusal of the critical part of these letters, the *old accusation* will be brought against me, and there will be a *fresh outcry* among thoughtless people that I am *an ill-natured man.*"

He entertained exalted opinions of his own powers, and he deeply felt their public neglect.

"While others," he says in his tracts, "have been *too much encouraged*, I have been *too much neglected*"—his favourite system, that religion gives principally to great poetry its spirit and enthusiasm, was an important point, which, he says, "has been left to be treated by *a person who has the honour of being your lordship's countryman*—your lordship knows, that persons *so much and so long oppressed as I have been*, have been always allowed to *say things concerning themselves* which in others might be offensive."

His vanity, we see, was equal to his vexation, and, as he grew old, he became more enraged; and, writing too often without Aristotle or Locke by his side, he gave the town pure Dennis, and almost ceased to be read. "The oppression," of which he complains, might not be less imaginary than his alarm, while a treaty was pending with France, that he should be delivered up to the Grand Monarque for having written a tragedy, which no one could read, against his majesty.

It is melancholy, but it is useful, to record the mortifications of such authors. Dennis had no doubt laboured with

zeal which could never meet a reward, and, perhaps, amid his critical labours, he turned often with an aching heart, from their barren contemplation to that of the tranquillity he might have derived from an humbler avocation.

It was not literature then that made the mind coarse, brutalizing the habits and inflaming the style of Dennis. He had thrown himself among the walks of genius, and aspired to fix himself on a throne to which Nature had refused him a legitimate claim. What a lasting source of vexation and rage, even for a long-lived patriarch of criticism!

Accustomed to suspend the scourge over the heads of the first authors of the age, he could not sit at a table, or enter a coffee-house, without exerting the despotism of a literary dictator. How could the mind, that had devoted itself to the contemplation of master-pieces only to reward its industry by detailing to the public their human frailties, experience one hour of amenity, one idea of grace, one generous impulse of sensibility?

But the poor critic himself at length fell, really more the victim of his criticisms than the genius he had insulted. Having incurred the public neglect, the blind and helpless Cacus in his den sunk fast into contempt, dragged on a life of misery, and in his last days, scarcely vomiting his fire and smoke, became the most pitiable creature, receiving the alms he craved from triumphant genius.

DISAPPOINTED GENIUS

TAKES A FATAL DIRECTION BY ITS ABUSE.

How the moral and literary character are reciprocally influenced, may be traced in the character of a personage peculiarly apposite to these inquiries. This worthy of literature is Orator Henley—who is rather known traditionally than historically.* He is so overwhelmed with the echoed satire

* So little is known of this singular man, that Mr. Dibdin, in his very curious "Bibliomania," was not able to recollect any other details than

of Pope, and his own extravagant conduct for many years, that I should not care to extricate him, had I not discovered a feature in the character of Henley not yet drawn, and constituting no inferior calamity among authors.

Henley stands in his "gilt tub" in the Dunciad; and a portrait of him hangs in the picture-gallery of the Commentary. Pope's verse and Warburton's notes are the pickle and the bandages for any Egyptian mummy of dulness, who will last as long as the pyramid that incloses him. I shall transcribe for the reader's convenience the lines of Pope :—

> "Embrown'd with native bronze, lo! Henley stands,
> Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands;
> How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue!
> How sweet the periods, neither said nor sung!
> Still break the benches, Henley, with thy strain,
> While Sherlock, Hare, and Gibson, preach in vain.
> Oh! great restorer of the good old stage,
> Preacher at once, and Zany of thy age!"*

It will surprise when I declare that this buffoon was an indefatigable student, a proficient in all the learned languages, an elegant poet, and, withal, a wit of no inferior class. It remains to discover why "the Preacher" became "the Zany."

Henley was of St. John's College, Cambridge, and was distinguished for the ardour and pertinacity of his studies; he gave evident marks of genius. There is a letter of his to the Spectator, signed *Peter de Quir*, which abounds with local wit and quaint humour. He had not attained his twenty-second year when he published a poem, entitled "Esther, Queen of Persia,"† written amid graver studies; for three

those he transcribed from Warburton's "Commentary on the Dunciad." In Mr. Nichols's "History of Leicestershire," a more copious account of Henley may be found: to their facts something is here added. It was, however, difficult to glean after so excellent a harvest-home. To the author of the "Life of Bowyer," and other works devoted to our authors, our literary history is more indebted, than to the labours of any other contemporary. He is the Prosper Marchand of English literature.

* It is, perhaps, unnecessary to point out this allusion of Pope to our ancient *mysteries*, where the *Clergy* were the *actors;* among which, the *Vice* or *Punch* was introduced.

† The title is, "Esther, Queen of Persia, an historical Poem, in four books; by John Henley, B.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge. 1714."

years after, Henley being M.A. published his "Complete Linguist," consisting of grammars of ten languages.

The poem itself must not be passed by in silent notice. It is preceded by a learned preface, in which the poet discovers his intimate knowledge of oriental studies, with some etymologies from the Persic, the Hebrew, and the Greek, concerning the name and person of Ahasuerus, whom he makes to be Xerxes. The close of this preface gives another unexpected feature in the character of him who, the poet tells us, was "embrowned with *native* bronze,"—an unaffected modesty! Henley, alluding to a Greek paraphrase of Barnes, censures his faults without acrimony, and even apologizes for them, by thus gracefully closing the preface: "These can only be alleviated by one plea, the youth of the author, which is a circumstance I hope the candid will consider in favour of the present writer!"

The poem is not destitute of imagination and harmony.

The pomp of the feast of Ahasuerus has all the luxuriance of Asiatic splendour; and the circumstances are selected with some fancy.

> "The higher guests approach a room of state,
> Where tissued couches all around were set
> Labour'd with art; o'er ivory tables thrown,
> Embroider'd carpets fell in folds adown.
> The bowers and gardens of the court were near,
> And open lights indulged the breathing air.
>
> "Pillars of marble bore a silken sky,
> While cords of purple and fine linen tie
> In silver rings, the azure canopy.
> Distinct with diamond stars the blue was seen,
> And earth and seas were feign'd in emerald green;
> A globe of gold, ray'd with a pointed crown,
> Form'd in the midst almost a real sun."

Nor is Henley less skilful in the elegance of his sentiments, and in his development of the human character. When Esther is raised to the throne the poet says,

> "And Esther, though in robes, is Esther still."

And then sublimely exclaims,

> "The heroic soul, amidst its bliss or woe,
> Is never swell'd too high, nor sunk too low;

Stands, like its origin above the skies,
Ever the same great self, sedately wise;
Collected and prepared in every stage
To scorn a courting world, or bear its rage."

But wit which the Spectator has sent down to posterity, and poetry which gave the promise of excellence, did not bound the noble ambition of Henley; ardent in more important labours, he was perfecting himself in the learned languages, and carrying on a correspondence with eminent scholars.

He officiated as the master of the free-school at his native town in Leicestershire, then in a declining state; but he introduced many original improvements. He established a class for public elocution, recitations of the classics, orations, &c.; and arranged a method of enabling every scholar to give an account of his studies without the necessity of consulting others, or of being examined by particular questions. These miracles are indeed a little apocryphal; for they are drawn from that pseudo-gospel of his life, of which I am inclined to think he himself was the evangelist. His grammar of ten languages was now finished; and his genius felt that obscure spot too circumscribed for his ambition. He parted from the inhabitants with their regrets; and came to the metropolis with thirty recommendatory letters.

Henley probably had formed those warm conceptions of patronage in which youthful genius cradles its hopes. Till 1724 he appears, however, to have obtained only a small living, and to have existed by translating and writing. Thus, after persevering studies, many successful literary efforts, and much heavy task-work, Henley found he was but a hireling author for the booksellers, and a salaried "Hyp-doctor" for the minister; for he received a stipend for this periodical paper, which was to cheer the spirits of the people by ridiculing the gloomy forebodings of Amhurst's "Craftsman." About this time the complete metamorphosis of the studious and ingenious John Henley began to branch out into its grotesque figure; and a curiosity in human nature was now about to be opened to public inspection. "The Preacher" was to personate "The Zany." His temper had become brutal, and he had gradually contracted a ferocity and grossness in his

manners, which seem by no means to have been indicated in his purer days.—His youth was disgraced by no irregularities —it was studious and honourable. But he was now quick at vilifying the greatest characters, and, having a perfect contempt for all mankind, was resolved to live by making one half of the world laugh at the other. Such is the direction which disappointed genius has too often given to its talents.

He first affected oratory, and something of a theatrical attitude, in his sermons, which greatly attracted the populace; and he startled those preachers who had so long dozed over their own sermons, and who now finding themselves with but few slumberers about them, envied their Ciceronian brother,

"Tuning his voice, and balancing his hands."

It was alleged against Henley, that "he drew the people too much from their parish churches, and was not so proper for a London Divine as a rural Pastor." He was offered a rustication, on a better living: but Henley did not come from the country to return to it.

There is a narrative of the life of Henley, which, subscribed by another person's name, he himself inserted in his "Oratory Transactions." As he had to publish himself this highly-seasoned biographical morsel, and as his face was then beginning to be "embrowned with bronze," he thus very impudently and very ingeniously apologizes for the panegyric:—

"If any remark of the writer appears favourable to myself, and be judged apocryphal, it may, however, weigh in the opposite scale to some things less obligingly said of me; false praise being as pardonable as false reproach." *

In this narrative we are told, that when at college—

"He began to be uneasy that he had not the liberty of thinking, without incurring the scandal of heterodoxy; he was impatient that systems of all sorts were put into his hands

* This narrative is subscribed A. Welstede. Warburton maliciously quotes it as a life of Henley, written by Welsted—doubtless designed to lower the writer of that name, and one of the heroes of the Dunciad. The public have long been deceived by this artifice: the effect, I believe, of Warburton's dishonesty.

ready carved out for him; it shocked him to find that he was commanded to believe against his judgment, and resolved some time or other to enter his protest against any person being bred like a slave, who is born an Englishman."

This is all very decorous, and nothing can be objected to the first cry of this reforming patriot, but a reasonable suspicion of its truth. If these sentiments were really in his mind at college, he deserves at least the praise of retention; for fifteen years were suffered to pass quietly without the patriotic volcano giving even a distant rumbling of the sulphureous matter concealed beneath. All that time had passed in the contemplation of church preferment, with the aerial perspective lighted by a visionary mitre. But Henley grew indignant at his disappointments, and suddenly resolved to reform "the gross impostures and faults that have long prevailed in the received *institutions* and *establishments* of *knowledge* and *religion*"—simply meaning that he wished to pull down the *Church* and the *University!*

But he was prudent before he was patriotic; he at first grafted himself on Whiston, adopting his opinions; and sent some queries by which it appears that Henley, previous to breaking with the church, was anxious to learn the power it had to punish him. The Arian Whiston was himself, from pure motives, suffering expulsion from Cambridge—for refusing his subscription to the Athanasian Creed; he was a pious man, and no buffoon, but a little crazed, Whiston afterwards discovered the character of his correspondent, he then requested the Bishop of London,—

"To summon Mr. Henley, the orator, whose vile history I knew so well, to come and tell it to the church. But the bishop said he could do nothing; since which time Mr. Henley has gone on for about twenty years without control every week, as an ecclesiastical mountebank, to abuse religion."

The most extraordinary project was now formed by Henley; he was to teach mankind universal knowledge from his lectures, and primitive Christianity from his sermons. He took apartments in Newport-market, and opened his "Oratory." He declared,

"He would teach more in one year than schools and uni-

versities did in five; and write and study twelve hours a day, and yet appear as untouched by the yoke, as if he never bore it."

In his "Idea of what is intended to be taught in the *Week-days' Universal Academy*," we may admire the fertility, and sometimes the grandeur of his views. His lectures and orations* are of a very different nature from what they are imagined to be; literary topics are treated with perspicuity and with erudition, and there is something original in the manner.

* Every lecture is dedicated to some branch of the Royal Family. Among them one is on "University Learning," an attack.—"On the English History and Historians," extremely curious.—"On the Languages, ancient and modern," full of erudition.—"On the English Tongue," a valuable criticism at that moment when our style was receiving a new polish from Addison and Prior. Henley, acknowledging that these writers had raised *correctness* of expression to its utmost height, adds, though, "If I mistake not, something to the detriment of that *force* and *freedom* that ought, with the most concealed art, to be a perfect copy of nature, in all compositions." This is among the first notices of that artificial style which has vitiated our native idiom, substituting for its purity an affected delicacy, and for its vigour profuse ornament. Henley observes that, "to be perspicuous, pure, elegant, copious, and harmonious, are the chief good qualities of writing in the English tongue; they are attained by study and practice, and lost by the contrary: but *imitation* is to be avoided; they cannot be made our own but by keeping the force of our understandings superior to our models; by *rendering our thoughts the original, and our words the copy.*"—"On Wit and Imagination," abounding with excellent criticism.—"On grave conundrums and serious buffoons in defence of burlesque discourses, from the most weighty authorities."—"A Dissertation upon Nonsense." At the close he has a fling at his friend Pope; it was after the publication of the Dunciad. "Of Nonsense there are celebrated professors; Mr. Pope grows witty like Bays in the 'Rehearsal,' by selling bargains (his subscriptions for Homer,) praising himself, laughing at his joke, and making his own works the test of any man's criticism; but he seems to be in some jeopardy; for the ghost of Homer has lately spoke to him in Greek, and Shakespeare resolves to bring him, as he has brought Shakespeare, to a tragical conclusion. Mr Pope suggests the last choice of a subject for writing a book, by making the *Nonsense* of others his argument; while his own puts it out of any writer's power to confute him." In another fling at Pope, he gives the reason why Mr. Pope adds the dirty dialect to that of the water, and is in love with the Nymphs of Fleet-ditch; and in a lecture on the spleen, he announced "An anatomical discovery, that Mr. Pope's spleen is bigger than his head!"

They were, no doubt, larded and stuffed with many high-seasoned jokes, which Henley did not send to the printer.

Henley was a charlatan and a knave; but in all his charlatanerie and his knavery he indulged the reveries of genius; many of which have been realised since; and, if we continue to laugh at Henley, it will indeed be cruel, for we shall be laughing at ourselves! Among the objects which Henley discriminates in his general design, were, to supply the want of a university, or universal school, in this capital, for persons of all ranks, professions, and capacities;—to encourage a literary correspondence with great men and learned bodies; the communication of all discoveries and experiments in science and the arts; to form an amicable society for the encouragement of learning, "in order to cultivate, adorn, and exalt the genius of Britain;" to lay a foundation for an English Academy; to give a standard to our language, and a digest to our history; to revive the ancient schools of philosophy and elocution, which last has been reckoned by Pancirollus among the *artes perditæ*. All these were "to bring all the parts of knowledge into the narrowest compass, placing them in the clearest light, and fixing them to the utmost certainty." The religion of the Oratory was to be that of the primitive Church in the first ages of the four first general councils, approved by parliament in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth. "The Church of England is really with us; we appeal to her own principles, and we shall not deviate from her, unless she deviates from herself." Yet his "Primitive Christianity" had all the sumptuous pomp of popery; his creeds and doxologies are printed in the red letter, and his liturgies in the black; his pulpit blazed in gold and velvet (Pope's "gilt tub"); while his "Primitive Eucharist" was to be distributed with all the ancient forms of celebrating the sacrifice of the altar, which he says, "are so noble, so just, sublime, and perfectly harmonious, that the change has been made to an unspeakable disadvantage." It was restoring the decorations and the mummery of the mass! He assumed even a higher tone, and dispersed medals, like those of Louis XIV., with the device of a sun near the meridian, and a motto, *Ad summa*, with an inscription expressive of the genius of this new adventurer,

Inveniam viam aut faciam! There was a snake in the grass; it is obvious that Henley, in improving literature and philosophy, had a deeper design—to set up a new sect! He called himself "a Rationalist," and on his death-bed repeatedly cried out, "Let my notorious enemies know I die a Rational."*

His address to the town† excited public curiosity to the utmost; and the floating crowds were repulsed by their own violence from this new paradise, where "The Tree of Knowledge" was said to be planted. At the succeeding meeting "the Restorer of Ancient Eloquence" informed "persons in chairs that they must come sooner." He first commenced by subscriptions to be raised from "Persons eminent in Arts and Literature," who, it seems were lured by the seductive promise, that, "if they had been virtuous or penitents, they should be commemorated;" an oblique hint at a panegyrical puff. In the decline of his popularity he permitted his doorkeeper, whom he dignifies with the title of *Ostiary*, to take a shilling! But he seems to have been popular for many years; even when his auditors were but few, they were of the better order;‡ and in notes respecting him which I have seen, by a contemporary, he is called "the reverend and learned." His favourite character was that of a restorer of Eloquence; and he was not destitute of the qualifications of a fine orator, a good voice, graceful gesture, and forcible elocution. Warburton justly remarked, "Sometimes he broke jests, and sometimes that bread which he called the Primitive Eucharist." He would degenerate into buffoonery on solemn occasions. His address to the Deity was at first awful, and seemingly devout; but, once expatiating on the several sects who would certainly be damned, he prayed that the Dutch might be *un-damm'd!* He undertook to show the ancient use of the petticoat, by quoting the Scriptures where the mother of Samuel is said to have made him "*a little coat*," ergo, a PETTI-*coat!*‖

* Thus he anticipated the term, since become so notorious among German theologians.

† It is preserved in "The Historical Register," vol. xi. for 1726. It is curious and well written.

‡ Gent. Mag. vol. lvii. p. 876.

‖ His "Defence of the Oratory" is a curious performance. He pre-

His advertisements were mysterious ribaldry to attract curiosity, while his own good sense would frequently chastise those who could not resist it; his auditors came in folly, but they departed in good humour.* These advertisements were usually preceded by a sort of motto, generally a sarcastic allusion to some public transaction of the preceding week.†

tends to derive his own from great authority. "St. Paul is related, Acts 28, to have dwelt *two whole years in his own hired house*, and to have received all that came in unto him, teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. This was at *Rome*, and doubtless was his practice in his other travels, there being the same reason in the thing to produce elsewhere the like circumstances." He proceeds to show "the calumnies and reproaches, and the novelty and impiety, with which Christianity, at its first setting out, was charged, as a mean, abject institution, not only useless and unserviceable, but pernicious to the public and its professors, as the refuse of the world."—Of the false accusations raised against Jesus—all this he applies to himself and his oratory—and he concludes, that "Bringing men to think rightly will always be reckoned a depraving of their minds by those who are desirous to keep them in a mistake, and who measure all truth by the standard of their own narrow opinions, views, and passions. The principles of this institution are those of right reason: the first ages of Christianity; true facts, clear criticism, and polite literature—if these corrupt the mind, to find a place where the mind will not be corrupted, will be impracticable." Thus speciously could "the Orator" reason, raising himself to the height of apostolical purity. And, when he was accused that he *did all for lucre*, he retorted, that "some *do nothing* for it;" and that "he preached more charity sermons than any clergyman in the kingdom."

* He once advertised an oration on marriage, which drew together an overflowing assembly of females; at which, solemnly shaking his head, he told the ladies, that "he was afraid, that oftentimes, as well as now, they came to church in hopes to get husbands, rather than be instructed by the preacher;" to which he added a piece of wit, not quite decent. He congregated the trade of shoemakers, by offering to show the most expeditious method of making shoes: he held out a boot, and cut off the leg part. He gave a lecture, which he advertised was "for the instruction of those who do not like it; it was on the philosophy, history, and great use of *Nonsense* to the learned, political, and polite world, who excel in it."

† Dr. Cobden, one of George the Second's chaplains, having, in 1748, preached a sermon at St. James's, from these words, "Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness," it gave so much displeasure, that the doctor was struck out of

Henley pretended to great impartiality; and when two preachers had animadverted on him, he issued an advertisement, announcing "A Lecture that will be a challenge to the Rev. Mr. Batty, and the Rev. Mr. Albert. Letters are sent to them on this head, and *a free standing place* is there to be had *gratis*." Once Henley offered to admit of a disputation, and that he would impartially determine the merits of the contest. It happened that Henley this time was overmatched; for two Oxonians, supported by a strong party to awe his "marrow-boners," as the butchers were called, said to be in the Orator's pay, entered the list; the one to defend the *ignorance*, the other the *impudence*, of the Restorer of Eloquence himself. As there was a door behind the rostrum, which led to his house, the Orator silently dropped out, postponing the award to some happier day.

This age of lecturers may find their model in Henley's "Universal Academy," and if any should aspire to bring themselves down to his genius, I furnish them with hints of anomalous topics. In the second number of "The Oratory Transactions," is a diary from July, 1726 to August, 1728. It forms, perhaps, an unparalleled chronicle of the vagaries of the human mind. These archives of cunning, of folly, and of literature, are divided into two diaries; the one "The Theological or Lord's days' subjects of the Oratory;" the other, "The Academical or Week-days' subjects." I can only note a few. It is easy to pick out ludicrous specimens; for he had a quaint humour peculiar to himself; but among these numerous topics are many curious for their knowledge and ingenuity.

"The last Wills and Testaments of the Patriarchs."

"An Argument to the Jews, with a proof that they ought

the list of chaplains; and the next Saturday, the following parody of his text appeared as a motto to Henley's advertisement:

"Away with the wicked before the king,
And away with the wicked behind him;
His throne it will bless
With righteousness,
And we shall know where to find him."

Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary.

to be Christians, for the same reason which they ought to be Jews."

"St. Paul's Cloak, Books, and Parchments, left at Troas."

"The tears of Magdalen, and the joy of Angels."

"New Converts in Religion." After pointing out the names of "Courayer and others, the D— of W—n, the Protestantism of the P—, the conversion of the Rev Mr. B—e, and Mr. Har—y," he closes with "Origen's opinion of Satan's conversion; with the choice and balance of Religion in all countries."

There is one remarkable entry:—

"Feb. 11. This week, all Mr. Henley's writings were seized, to be examined by the State. *Vide Magnam Chartam*, and *Eng. Lib.*"

It is evident by what follows that the *personalities* he made use of, were one means of attracting auditors.

"On the action of Cicero, and the beauty of Eloquence, and on living characters; of action in the Senate, at the Bar, and in the Pulpit—of the Theatrical in all men. The manner of my Lord —, Sir —, Dr. —, the B. of —, being a proof how al life is playing something, but with different action."

In a Lecture on the History of Bookcraft, an account was given—

"Of the plenty of books, and dearth of sense; the advantages of the Oratory to the booksellers, in advertising for them; and to their customers, in making books useless; with all the learning, reason, and wit, more than are proper for one advertisement."

Amid these eccentricities it is remarkable, that "the Zany" never forsook his studies; and the amazing multiplicity of the MSS. he left behind him, confirm this extraordinary fact. "These," he says, "are six thousand more or less, that I value at one guinea a piece; with 150 volumes of common places of wit, memoranda," &c. They were sold for much less than one hundred pounds; I have looked over many; they are written with great care. Every leaf has an opposite blank page, probably left for additions or corrections, so that if his nonsense were spontaneous, his sense was the fruit of study and correction.

Such was "Orator Henley!" A scholar of great acquirements, and of no mean genius; hardy and inventive, eloquent and witty; he might have been an ornament to literature, which he made ridiculous; and the pride of the pulpit, which he so egregiously disgraced; but, having blunted and worn out that interior feeling, which is the instinct of the good man, and the wisdom of the wise, there was no balance in his passions, and the decorum of life was sacrificed to its selfishness. He condescended to live on the follies of the people, and his sordid nature had changed him till he crept, "licking the dust with the serpent."

THE MALADIES OF AUTHORS.

The practice of every art subjects the artist to some particular inconvenience, usually inflicting some malady on that member which has been over-wrought by excess: nature abused, pursues man into his most secret corners, and avenges herself. In the athletic exercises of the ancient Gymnasium, the pugilists were observed to become lean from their hips downwards, while the superior parts of their bodies, which they over-exercised, were prodigiously swollen; on the contrary, the racers were meagre upwards, while their feet acquired an unnatural dimension. The secret source of life seems to be carried forwards to those parts which are making the most continued efforts.

In all sedentary labours, some particular malady is contracted by every worker, derived from particular postures of the body and peculiar habits. Thus the weaver, the tailor, the painter, and the glass-blower, have all their respective maladies. The diamond-cutter, with a furnace before him, may be said almost to live in one; the slightest air must be shut out of the apartment, lest it scatter away the precious dust—a breath would ruin him!

The analogy is obvious;* and the author must participate in

* Hawkesworth, in the second part of the Adventurer, has composed,

the common fate of all sedentary occupations. But his maladies, from the very nature of the delicate organ of thinking, intensely exercised, are more terrible than those of any other profession; they are more complicated, more hidden in their causes, and the mysterious union and secret influence of the faculties of the soul over those of the body, are visible, yet still incomprehensible; they frequently produce a perturbation in the faculties, a state of acute irritability, and many sorrows and infirmities, which are not likely to create much sympathy from those around the author, who, at a glance, could have discovered where the pugilist or the racer became meagre or monstrous; the intellectual malady eludes even the tenderness of friendship.

The more obvious maladies engendered by the life of a student arise from over-study. These have furnished a curious volume to Tissot, in his treatise "On the Health of Men of Letters;" a book, however, which chills and terrifies more than it does good.

The unnatural fixed postures, the perpetual activity of the mind, and the inaction of the body; the brain exhausted with assiduous toil deranging the nerves, vitiating the digestive powers, disordering its own machinery, and breaking the calm of sleep by that previous state of excitement which study throws us into, are some of the calamities of a studious life: for like the ocean, when its swell is subsiding, the waves of the mind too still heave and beat; hence all the small feverish symptoms, and the whole train of hypochondriac affections, as well as some acute ones.*

from his own feelings, an elegant description of intellectual and corporeal labour, and the sufferings of an author, with the uncertainty of his labour and his reward.

* Dr. Fuller's "Medicina Gymnastica, or, a treatise concerning the power of Exercise, with respect to the Animal Œconomy, fifth edition, 1718," is useful to remind the student of what he is apt to forget; for the object of this volume is to *substitute exercise for medicine.* He wrote the book before he became a physician. He considers horse-riding as the best and noblest of all exercises, it being "a mixt exercise, partly active and partly passive, while other sorts, such as walking, running, stooping, or the like, require some labour and more strength for their performance." Cheyne, in his well-known treatise of "The English

Among the correspondents of the poets Hughes and Thomson, there is a pathetic letter from a student. Alexander Bayne, to prepare his lectures, studied fourteen hours a day for eight months successively, and wrote 1600 sheets. Such intense application, which, however, not greatly exceeds that of many authors, brought on the bodily complaints he has minutely described, with "all the dispiriting symptoms of a nervous illness, commonly called vapours, or lowness of spirits." Bayne who was of an athletic temperament, imagined he had not paid attention to his diet, to the lowness of his desk, and his habit of sitting with a particular compression of the body; —in future, all these were to be avoided. He prolonged his life for five years; and, perhaps, was still flattering his hopes with sharing, one day, in the literary celebrity of his friends, when, to use his words, "the same illness made a fierce attack upon me again, and has kept me in a very bad state of

Malady," published about twenty years after Fuller's work, acknowledges that riding on horseback is the best of all exercises, for which he details his reasons. "Walking," he says, "though it will answer the same end, yet is it more laborious and tiresome;" but amusement ought always to be combined with the exercise of a student; the mind will receive no refreshment by a solitary walk or ride, unless it be agreeably withdrawn from all thoughtfulness and anxiety; if it continue studying in its recreations, it is the sure means of obtaining neither of its objects —a friend, not an author, will at such a moment be the better companion.

The last chapter in Fuller's work contains much curious reading on the ancient physicians, and their gymnastic courses, which Asclepiades, the pleasantest of all the ancient physicians, greatly studied; he was most fortunate in the invention of exercises to supply the place of much physic, and (says Fuller) no man in any age ever had the happiness to obtain so general an applause; Pliny calls him the delight of mankind. Admirable physician, who had so many ways, it appears, to make physic agreeable! He invented the *lecti pensiles*, or hanging beds, that the sick might be rocked to sleep; which took so much at that time, that they became a great luxury among the Romans.

Fuller judiciously does not recommend the gymnastic courses, because horse-riding, for persons of delicate constitutions, is preferable; he discovers too the reason why the ancients did not introduce this mode of exercise—it arose from the simple circumstance of their not knowing the use of stirrups, which was a later invention. Riding with the ancients was, therefore, only an exercise for the healthy and the robust; a horse without stirrups was a formidable animal for a valetudinarian.

inactivity and disrelish of all my ordinary amusements:" those *amusements* were his serious *studies*. There is a fascination in literary labour: the student feeds on magical drugs; to withdraw him from them requires nothing less than that greater magic, which could break his own spells. A few months after this letter was written, Bayne died on the way to Bath, a martyr to his studies.

The excessive labour on a voluminous work, which occupies a long life, leaves the student with a broken constitution, and his sight decayed or lost. The most admirable observer of mankind, and the truest painter of the human heart, declares, "The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the *mind that museth on many things*." Of this class was old Randle Cotgrave, the curious collector of the most copious dictionary of old French and old English words and phrases. The work is the only treasury of our genuine idiom. Even this labour of the lexicographer, so copious and so elaborate, must have been projected with rapture, and pursued with pleasure, till, in the progress, "the mind was musing on many things." Then came the melancholy doubt, that drops mildew from its enveloping wings over the voluminous labour of a laborious author, whether he be wisely consuming his days, and not perpetually neglecting some higher duties, or some happier amusements. Still the enchanted delver sighs, and strikes on, in the glimmering mine of hope. If he live to complete the great labour, it is, perhaps, reserved for the applause of the next age; for, as our great lexicographer exclaimed, "In this gloom of solitude I have protracted my work, till those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds;" but, if it be applauded in his own, that praise has come too late for him whose literary labour has stolen away his sight. Cotgrave had grown blind over his dictionary, and was doubtful whether this work of his laborious days and nightly vigils was not a superfluous labour, and nothing, after all, but a "poor bundle of words." The reader may listen to the grey-headed martyr, addressing his patron, Lord Burghley:

"I presem to your lordship an account of the *expense of*

many hours, which, in your service, and to mine own benefit, *might have been otherwise employed.* My desires have aimed at more substantial marks; but *mine eyes* failed them, and forced me to *spend out their vigour in this bundle of words*, which may be unworthy of your lordship's great patience, and, perhaps, *ill-suited to the expectation of others.*"

A great number of young authors have died of over-study. An intellectual enthusiasm, accompanied by constitutional delicacy, has swept away half the rising genius of the age. Curious calculators have affected to discover the average number of infants who die under the age of five years: had they investigated those of the children of genius who perish before their thirtieth year, we should not be less amazed at this waste of man. There are few scenes more afflicting, nor which more deeply engage our sympathy, than that of a youth, glowing with the devotion of study, and resolute to distinguish his name among his countrymen, while death is stealing on him, touching with premature age, before he strikes the last blow. The author perishes on the very pages which give a charm to his existence. The fine taste and tender melancholy of Headley, the fervid genius of Henry Kirke White, will not easily pass away; but how many youths as noble-minded have not had the fortune of Kirke White to be commemorated by genius, and have perished without their fame! Henry Wharton is a name well known to the student of English literature; he published historical criticisms of high value; and he left, as some of the fruits of his studies, sixteen volumes of MSS., preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth. These great labours were pursued with the ardour that only could have produced them; the author had not exceeded his thirtieth year, when he sank under his continued studies, and perished a martyr to literature. Our literary history abounds with instances of the sad effects of an over-indulgence in study: that agreeable writer, Howel, had nearly lost his life by an excess of this nature, studying through long nights in the depth of winter. This severe study occasioned an imposthume in his head; he was eighteen days without sleep; and the illness was attended with many other afflicting symptoms. The eager diligence of Blackmore, protract-

ing his studies through the night, broke his health, and obliged him to fly to a country retreat. Harris, the historian, died of a consumption by midnight studies, as his friend Hollis mentions. I shall add a recent instance, which I myself witnessed: it is that of John Macdiarmid. He was one of those Scotch students whom the golden fame of Hume and Robertson attracted to the metropolis. He mounted the first steps of literary adventure with credit; and passed through the probation of editor and reviewer, till he strove for more heroic adventures. He published some volumes, whose subjects display the aspirings of his genius: "An Inquiry into the Nature of Civil and Military Subordination;" another into "the System of Military Defence." It was during these labours I beheld this inquirer, of a tender frame, emaciated, and study-worn, with hollow eyes, where the mind dimly shone like a lamp in a tomb. With keen ardour he opened a new plan of biographical politics. When, by one who wished the author was in better condition, the dangers of excess in study were brought to his recollection, he smiled, and, with something of a mysterious air, talked of unalterable confidence in the powers of his mind; of the indefinite improvement in our faculties: and, with this enfeebled frame, considered himself capable of continuous labour. His whole life, indeed, was one melancholy trial. Often the day cheerfully passed without its meal, but never without its page. The new system of political biography was advancing, when our young author felt a paralytic stroke. He afterwards resumed his pen: and a second one proved fatal. He lived just to pass through the press his "Lives of British Statesmen," a splendid quarto, whose publication he owed to the generous temper of a friend, who, when the author could not readily procure a publisher, would not see the dying author's last hope disappointed. Some research and reflection are combined in this literary and civil history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but it was written with the blood of the author, for Macdiarmid died of over-study and exhaustion.

Among the maladies of poor authors, who procure a precarious existence by their pen, one, not the least considerable, is their old age; their flower and maturity of life were

shed for no human comforts; and old age is the withered root. The late THOMAS MORTIMER, the compiler, among other things, of that useful work, "The Student's Pocket Dictionary," felt this severely—he himself experienced no abatement of his ardour, nor deficiency in his intellectual powers, at near the age of eighty;—but he then would complain "of the paucity of literary employment, and the preference given to young adventurers." Such is the *youth*, and such the *old age* of ordinary authors!

LITERARY SCOTCHMEN.

WHAT literary emigrations from the North, of young men of genius, seduced by a romantic passion for literary fame, and lured by the golden prospects which the happier genius of some of their own countrymen opened on them! A volume might be written on literary Scotchmen, who have perished immaturely in this metropolis; little known, and slightly connected, they have dropped away among us, and scarcely left a vestige in the wrecks of their genius. Among them some authors may be discovered who might have ranked, perhaps, in the first classes of our literature. I shall select four out of as many hundred, who were not entirely unknown to me; a romantic youth—a man of genius—a brilliant prose writer—and a labourer in literature.

ISAAC RITSON (not the poetical antiquary) was a young man of genius, who perished immaturely in this metropolis by attempting to exist by the efforts of his pen.

In early youth he roved among his native mountains, with the battles of Homer in his head, and his bow and arrow in his hand; in calmer hours, he nearly completed a spirited version of Hesiod, which constantly occupied his after-studies; yet our minstrel archer did not less love the severer sciences.

Selected at length to rise to the eminent station of a vil-

lage Schoolmaster,—from the thankless office of pouring cold rudiments into heedless ears, RITSON took a poetical flight. It was among the mountains and wild scenery of Scotland, that our young Homer, picking up fragments of heroic songs, and composing some fine ballad poetry, would, in his wanderings, recite them with such passionate expression, that he never failed of auditors; and found even the poor generous, when their better passions were moved. Thus he lived, like some old troubadour, by his rhymes, and his chants, and his virelays; and, after a year's absence, our bard returned in the triumph of verse. This was the most seducing moment of life; RITSON felt himself a laureated Petrarch; but he had now quitted his untutored but feeling admirers; and the child of fancy was to mix with the every-day business of life.

At Edinburgh he studied medicine, lived by writing theses for the idle and the incompetent, and composed a poem on Medicine, till at length his hopes and his ambition conducted him to London. But the golden age of the imagination soon deserted him in his obscure apartment in the glittering metropolis. He attended the hospitals, but these were crowded by students who, if they relished the science less, loved the trade more: he published a hasty version of Homer's Hymn to Venus, which was good enough to be praised, but not to sell; at length his fertile imagination withering over the task-work of literature, he resigned fame for bread; wrote the preface to Clarke's Survey of the Lakes, compiled medical articles for the Monthly Review; and, wasting his fast ebbing spirits, he retreated to an obscure lodging at Islington, where death relieved a hopeless author, in the twenty-seventh year of his life.

The following unpolished lines were struck off at a heat in trying his pen on the back of a letter; he wrote the names of the Sister Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—the sudden recollection of his own fate rushed on him—and thus the rhapsodist broke out:

> "I wonder much, as yet ye're spinning, Fates!
> What threads yet twisted out for me, old jades!
> Ah, Atropos! perhaps for me thou spinn'st
> Neglect, contempt, and penury and woe;

Be 't so; whilst that foul fiend, the spleen,
And moping melancholy spare me, all the rest
I'll bear, as should a man; 'twill do me good,
And teach me what no better fortune could,
Humility, and sympathy with others' ills.
——————————Ye destinies,
I love you much; ye flatter not my pride.
Your mien 'tis true, is wrinkled, hard, and sour;
Your words are harsh and stern; and sterner still
Your purposes to me. Yet I forgive
Whatever you have done, or mean to do.
Beneath some baleful planet born, I've found,
In all this world, no friend with fostering hand
To lead me on to science, which I love
Beyond all else the world could give; yet still
Your rigour I forgive; ye are not yet my foes;
My own untutor'd will's my only curse.
We grasp asphaltic apples; blooming poison!
We love what we should hate; how kind, ye Fates,
To thwart our wishes! O you're kind to scourge!
And flay us to the bone to make us feel!"—

Thus deeply he enters into his own feelings, and abjures his errors, as he paints the utter desolation of the soul while falling into the grave opening at his feet.

The town was once amused almost every morning by a series of humorous or burlesque poems by a writer under the assumed name of *Matthew Bramble*—he was at that very moment one of the most moving spectacles of human melancholy I have ever witnessed.

It was one evening I saw a tall, famished, melancholy man enter a bookseller's shop, his hat flapped over his eyes, and his whole frame evidently feeble from exhaustion and utter misery. The bookseller inquired how he proceeded in his new tragedy. "Do not talk to me about my tragedy! Do not talk to me about my tragedy! I have indeed more tragedy than I can bear at home!" was the reply, and the voice faltered as he spoke. This man was Matthew Bramble, or rather—M'Donald, the author of the tragedy of Vimonda, at that moment the writer of comic poetry—his tragedy was indeed a domestic one, in which he himself was the greatest actor amid his disconsolate family; he shortly afterwards perished. M'Donald had walked from Scotland with no

other fortune than the novel of "The Independent" in one pocket, and the tragedy of "Vimonda" in the other. Yet he lived some time in all the bloom and flush of poetical confidence. Vimonda was even performed several nights, but not with the success the romantic poet, among his native rocks, had conceived was to crown his anxious labours—the theatre disappointed him—and afterwards, to his feelings, all the world!

Logan had the dispositions of a poetic spirit, not cast in a common mould; with fancy he combined learning, and with eloquence philosophy.

His claims on our sympathy arise from those circumstances in his life which open the secret sources of the calamities of authors; of those minds of finer temper, who, having tamed the heat of their youth by the patient severity of study, from causes not always difficult to discover, find their favourite objects and their fondest hopes barren and neglected. It is then that the thoughtful melancholy, which constitutes so large a portion of their genius, absorbs and consumes the very faculties to which it gave birth.

Logan studied at the University of Edinburgh, was ordained in the church of Scotland—and early distinguished as a poet by the simplicity and the tenderness of his verses, yet the philosophy of history had as deeply interested his studies.—He gave two courses of lectures. I have heard from his pupils their admiration, after the lapse of many years; so striking were those lectures for having successfully applied the science of moral philosophy to the history of nations. All wished that Logan should obtain the chair of the Professor of Universal History—but from some point of etiquette he failed in obtaining that distinguished office.

This was his first disappointment in life, yet then perhaps but lightly felt; for the public had approved of his poems, and a successful poet is easily consoled. Poetry to such a gentle being seems a universal specific for all the evils of life; it acts at the moment, exhausting and destroying too often the constitution it seems to restore.

He had finished the tragedy of "Runnymede;" it was accepted at Covent-garden, but interdicted by the Lord Cham-

berlain, from some suspicion that its lofty sentiments contained allusions to the politics of the day. The Barons-in-arms who met John, were conceived to be deeper politicians than the poet himself was aware of. This was the second disappointment in the life of this man of genius.

The third calamity was the natural consequence of a tragic poet being also a Scotch clergyman. Logan had inflicted a wound on the Presbytery, heirs of the genius of old Prynne, whose puritanic fanaticism had never forgiven Home for his "Douglas," and now groaned to detect genius still lurking among them. Logan, it is certain, expressed his contempt for them; they their hatred of him: folly and pride in a poet, to beard Presbyters in a land of Presbyterians!

He gladly abandoned them, retiring on a small annuity. They had, however, hurt his temper—they had irritated the nervous system of a man too susceptible of all impressions, gentle or unkind—his character had all those unequal habitudes which genius contracts in its boldness and its tremors; he was now vivacious and indignant, and now fretted and melancholy. He flew to the metropolis, occupied himself in literature, and was a frequent contributor to the "English Review." He published a "Review of the Principal Charges against Mr. Hastings." Logan wrestled with the genius of Burke and Sheridan; the House of Commons ordered the publisher Stockdale to be prosecuted, but the author did not live to rejoice in the victory obtained by his genius.

This elegant philosopher has impressed on all his works the seal of genius; and his posthumous compositions became even popular; he who had with difficulty escaped excommunication by Presbyters, left the world after his death two volumes of sermons, which breathe all that piety, morality, and eloquence admire. His unrevised lectures, published under the name of a person, one Rutherford, who had purchased the MS., were given to the world in "A View of Ancient History." But one highly-finished composition he had himself published; it is a philosophical review of Despotism: had the name of Gibbon been affixed to the title-page, its authenticity had not been suspected.*

* This admirable little work is entitled, "A Dissertation on the Go-

From one of his executors, Dr. Donald Grant, who wrote the life prefixed to his poems, I heard of the state of his MSS.; the scattered yet warm embers of the unhappy bard. Several tragedies, and one on Mary Queen of Scots, abounding with all that domestic tenderness and poetic sensibility which formed the soft and natural feature of his muse; these, with minor poems, thirty lectures on the Roman History, and portions of a periodical paper, were the wrecks of genius! He resided here, little known out of a very private circle, and perished in his fortieth year, not of penury, but of a broken heart. Such noble and well-founded expectations of fortune and fame, all the plans of literary ambition overturned, his genius, with all its delicacy, its spirit, and its elegance, became a prey to that melancholy which constituted so large a portion of it.

Logan, in his "Ode to a Man of Letters," had formed this lofty conception of a great author:—

"Won from neglected wastes of time,
Apollo hails his fairest clime,
The provinces of mind;
An Egypt with eternal towers *;
See Montesquieu redeem the hours
From Louis to mankind.

No tame remission genius knows,
No interval of dark repose,
To quench the ethereal flame;
From Thebes to Troy the victor hies,
And Homer with his hero vies,
In varied paths to Fame.

Our children will long repeat his "Ode to the Cuckoo," one of the most lovely poems in our language; magical stanzas of picture, melody, and sentiment.

These authors were undoubtedly men of finer feelings, who all perished immaturely, victims in the higher depart-

vernments, Manners, and Spirit of Asia; Murray, 1787." It is anonymous; but the publisher informed me it was written by Logan. His "Elements of the Philosophy of History" are valuable. His "Sermons" have been republished.

* The finest provinces of Egypt gained from a neglected waste.

ment of literature! But this article would not be complete without furnishing the reader with a picture of the fate of one, who, with a pertinacity of industry not common, having undergone regular studies, not very injudiciously deemed that the life of a man of letters could provide for the simple wants of a philosopher.

This man was the late ROBERT HERON, who, in the following letter, transcribed from the original, stated his history to the Literary Fund. It was written in a moment of extreme bodily suffering and mental agony. In the house to which he had been hurried for debt—at such a moment, he found eloquence in a narrative, pathetic from its simplicity, and valuable for its genuineness, as giving the results of a life of literary industry, productive of great infelicity and disgrace; one would imagine that the author had been a criminal rather than a man of letters.

"*The Case of a Man of Letters, of regular education, living by honest literary industry.*

"Ever since I was eleven years of age I have mingled with my studies the labour of teaching or of writing, to support and educate myself.

"During about twenty years, while I was in the constant or occasional attendance at the University of Edinburgh, I taught and assisted young persons, at all periods, in the course of education; from the Alphabet to the highest branches of Science and Literature.

"I read a course of Lectures on the Law of Nature, the Law of Nations, the Jewish, the Grecian, the Roman, and the Canon Law, and then on the Feudal Law; and on the several forms of Municipal Jurisprudence established in Modern Europe. I printed a Syllabus of these Lectures, which was approved. They were intended as introductory to the professional study of Law, and to assist gentlemen who did not study it professionally, in the understanding of History.

"I translated Fourcroy's Chemistry twice, from both the second and the third editions of the original; Fourcroy's Philosophy of Chemistry; Savary's Travels in Greece; Dumourier's Letters: Gessner's Idylls in part; an abstract of

Zimmerman on Solitude, and a great diversity of smaller pieces.

"I wrote a Journey through the Western Parts of Scotland, which has passed through two editions; a History of Scotland in six volumes 8vo.; a Topographical Account of Scotland, which has been several times reprinted; a number of communications in the Edinburgh Magazine; many Prefaces and Critiques; a Memoir of the life of Burns the Poet, which suggested and promoted the subscription for his family; has been many times reprinted, and formed the basis of Dr. Currie's Life of him, as I learned by a letter from the Doctor to one of his friends; a variety of *Jeux d'Esprit* in verse and prose; and many abridgments of large works.

"In the beginning of 1799, I was encouraged to come to London. Here I have written a great multiplicity of articles in almost every branch of science and literature; my education at Edinburgh having comprehended them all. The London Review, the Agricultural Magazine, the Anti-jacobin Review, the Monthly Magazine, the Universal Magazine, the Public Characters, the Annual Necrology, with several other periodical works, contain many of my communications. In such of those publications as have been reviewed, I can show that my anonymous pieces have been distinguished with very high praise. I have written also a short system of Chemistry in one volume 8vo.; and I published a few weeks since a small work called "Comforts of Life," * of which the first edition was sold in one week, and the second edition is now in rapid sale.

"In the Newspapers—the Oracle, the Porcupine, when it existed, the General Evening Post, the Morning Post, the British Press, the Courier, &c., I have published many Reports of Debates in Parliament, and, I believe, a greater variety of light fugitive pieces than I know to have been written by any one other person.

* The "Comforts of Life" were written in prison: "The Miseries" necessarily in a drawing-room. The works of authors are often in contrast with themselves; melancholy authors are the most jocular, and the most humorous the most melancholy.

"I have written also a variety of compositions in the Latin and the French languages, in favour of which I have been honoured with the testimonies of liberal approbation.

"I have invariably written to serve the cause of religion, morality, pious Christian education, and good order, in the most direct manner. I have considered what I have written as mere trifles; and have incessantly studied to qualify myself for something better. I can prove that I have, for many years, read and written, one day with another, from twelve to sixteen hours a day. As a human being, I have not been free from follies and errors. But the tenor of my life has been temperate, laborious, humble, quiet, and, to the utmost of my power, beneficent. I can prove the general tenor of my writings to have been candid, and ever adapted to exhibit the most favourable views of the abilities, dispositions, and exertions of others.

"For these last ten months I have been brought to the very extremity of bodily and pecuniary distress.

"I shudder at the thought of perishing in a jail.

"92 *Chancery-lane*,

"*Feb.* 2, 1807. (In confinement.)"

The physicians reported that Robert Heron's health was such "as rendered him totally incapable of extricating himself from the difficulties in which he was involved, by the *indiscreet exertion of his mind, in protracted and incessant literary labours.*"

About three months after, Heron sunk under a fever, and perished amid the walls of Newgate. We are disgusted with this horrid state of pauperism; we are indignant at beholding an author, not a contemptible one, in this last stage of human wretchedness! after early and late studies, after having read and written from twelve to sixteen hours a day!—O ye populace of scribblers! before ye are driven to a garret, and your eyes are filled with constant tears, pause—recollect that few of you possess the learning or the abilities of Heron.

The fate of Heron—is the fate of hundreds of authors by profession in the present day; of men of some literary talent, who can never extricate themselves from a degrading state of poverty.

LABORIOUS AUTHORS.

This is one of the groans of old Burton over his laborious work, when he is anticipating the reception it is like to meet with, and personates his objectors:—He says,

"This is a thinge of meere industrie; a collection without wit or invention; a very toy!—So men are valued! their labours vilified by fellowes of no worth themselves, as things of nought; who could not have done as much?"

There is, indeed, a class of authors who are liable to forfeit all claims to genius, whatever their genius may be—these are the laborious writers of voluminous works; but they are farther subject to heavier grievances, to be undervalued or neglected by the apathy or the ingratitude of the public.

Industry is often conceived to betray the absence of intellectual exertion, and the magnitude of a work is imagined necessarily to shut out all genius. Yet a laborious work has often had an original growth and raciness in it, requiring a genius whose peculiar feeling, like invisible vitality, is spread through the mighty body. Feeble imitations of such laborious works have proved the master's mind that is in the original. There is a talent in industry, which every industrious man does not possess; and even taste and imagination may lead to the deepest studies of antiquities, as well as mere undiscerning curiosity and plodding dulness.

But there are other more striking characteristics of intellectual feeling in authors of this class. The fortitude of mind which enables them to complete labours of which, in many instances, they are conscious that the real value will only be appreciated by dispassionate posterity, themselves rarely living to witness the fame of their own works established; while they endure the captiousness of malicious cavillers. It is said that the Optics of Newton had no character or credit here till noticed in France. It would not be the only instance of an author writing above his own age, and anticipating its more advanced genius. How many works of erudition might be adduced to show their authors' disappointments! Prideaux's learned work of the "Connexion of the Old and

New Testament," and SHUCKFORD's similar one, were both a long while before they could obtain a publisher, and much longer before they found readers. It is said Sir WALTER RALEIGH burned the second volume of his History from the ill success the first had met with. PRINCE's "Worthies of Devon" was so unfavourably received by the public, that the laborious and patriotic author was so discouraged as not to print the second volume, which is said to have been prepared for the press.—FARNEWORTH's elaborate Translation, with notes and dissertations, of Machiavel's works, was hawked about the town; and the poor author discovered that he understood Machiavel better than the public. After other labours of this kind, he left his family in distressed circumstances.—Observe, this excellent book now bears a high price!—The fate of the "Biographia Britannica," in its first edition, must be noticed: the spirit and acuteness of CAMPBELL, the curious industry of OLDYS, and the united labours of very able writers, could not secure public favour; this treasure of our literary history was on the point of being suspended, when a poem by Gilbert West drew the public attention to that elaborate work, which, however, still languished, and was hastily concluded.—GRANGER says of his admirable work, in one of his letters, "On a fair state of my account, it would appear that my labours in the improvement of my work do not amount to *half the pay of a scavenger!*" He received only one hundred pounds to the times of Charles I., and the rest to depend on public favour for the continuation. The sale was sluggish; even Walpole seemed doubtful of its success, though he probably secretly envied the skill of our portrait-painter It was too philosophical for the mere collector, and it took near ten years before it reached the hands of philosophers; the author derived little profit, and never lived to see its popularity established! We have had many highly valuable works suspended for their want of public patronage, to the utter disappointment, and sometimes the ruin of their authors; such are OLDYS's "British Librarian," MORGAN's "Phœnix Britannicus," Dr. BERKENHOUT's "Biographia Literaria," Professor MARTYN's and Dr. LETTICE's "Antiquities of Herculaneum:" all these are *first* volumes,

there are no *seconds!* They are now rare, curious, and high priced! Ungrateful public! Unhappy authors!

That noble enthusiasm which so strongly characterizes genius, in productions whose originality is of a less ambiguous nature, has been experienced by some of these laborious authors, who have sacrificed their lives and fortunes to their beloved studies. The enthusiasm of literature has often been that of heroism, and many have not shrunk from the forlorn hope.

Rushworth and Rymer, to whose collections our history stands so deeply indebted, must have strongly felt this literary ardour, for they passed their lives in forming them: till Rymer, in the utmost distress, was obliged to sell his books and fifty volumes of MSS. which he could not get printed; and Rushworth died in the King's Bench, of a broken heart; many of his papers still remain unpublished. His ruling passion was amassing state matters, and he voluntarily neglected great opportunities of acquiring a large fortune for this entire devotion of his life. The same fate has awaited the similar labours of many authors to whom the history of our country lies under deep obligations. Arthur Collins, the historiographer of our Peerage, and the curious collector of the valuable "Sydney papers," and other collections, passed his life in rescuing these wrecks of antiquity, in giving authencity to our history, or contributing fresh materials to it; but his midnight vigils were cheered by no patronage, nor his labours valued, till the eye that pored on the mutilated MS. was for ever closed. Of all those curious works of the late Mr. Strutt, which are now bearing such high prices, all were produced by extensive reading, and illustrated by his own drawings, from the manuscripts of different epochs in our history. What was the result to that ingenious artist and author, who, under the plain simplicity of an antiquary, concealed a fine poetical mind, and an enthusiasm for his beloved pursuits to which only we are indebted for them? Strutt, living in the greatest obscurity, and voluntarily sacrificing all the ordinary views of life, and the trade of his *burin*, solely attached to national antiquities, and charmed by calling them into a fresh existence under his pencil, I have witnessed

at the British Museum, forgetting for whole days his miseries, in sedulous research and delightful labour; at times even doubtful whether he could get his works printed; for some of which he was not regaled even with the Roman supper of "a radish and an egg." How he left his domestic affairs, his son can tell; how his works have tripled their value, the booksellers. In writing on the Calamities attending the love of literary labour, Mr. JOHN NICHOLS, the modest annalist of the literary history of the last century, and the friend of half the departed genius of our country, cannot but occur to me. He zealously published more than fifty works, illustrating the literature and the antiquities of the country; labours not given to the world without great sacrifices. Bishop Hurd, with friendly solicitude, writes to Mr. Nichols on some of his own publications, "While you are enriching the Antiquarian world" (and, by the life of Bowyer, may be added the Literary), "I hope you do not forget yourself. *The profession of an author, I know from experience, is not a lucrative one.*—I only mention this because I see a large catalogue of your publications." At another time the Bishop writes, "You are very good to excuse my freedom with you; but, as times go, almost any trade is better than that of an author," &c. On these notes Mr. Nichols confesses, "I have had some occasion to regret that I did not attend to the judicious suggestions." We owe to the late THOMAS DAVIES, the author of "Garrick's Life," and other literary works, beautiful editions of some of our elder poets, which are now eagerly sought after, yet, though all his publications were of the best kinds, and are now of increasing value, the taste of Tom Davies twice ended in bankruptcy. It is to be lamented for the cause of literature, that even a bookseller may have too refined a taste for his trade; it must always be his interest to float on the current of public taste, whatever that may be; should he have an ambition to *create* it, he will be anticipating a more cultivated curiosity by half a century; thus the business of a bookseller rarely accords with the design of advancing our literature.

The works of literature, it is then but too evident, receive no equivalent; let this be recollected by him who would draw his existence from them. A young writer often resembles

that imaginary author whom Johnson, in a humorous letter in the Idler (No. 55), represents as having composed a work "of universal curiosity, computed that it would call for many editions of his book, and that in five years he should gain fifteen thousand pounds by the sale of thirty thousand copies." There are, indeed, some who have been dazzled by the good fortune of GIBBON, ROBERTSON, and HUME; we are to consider these favourites, not merely as authors, but aspossessing, by their situation in life, a certain independence which preserved them from the vexations of the authors I have noticed. Observe, however, that the uncommon sum Gibbon received for copyright, though it excited the astonishment of the philosopher himself, was for the continued labour of a *whole life*, and probably the *library* he had purchased for his work equalled at least in cost the produce of his *pen;* the tools cost the workman as much as he obtained for his work. Six thousand pounds gained on these terms will keep an author indigent!

Many great labours have been designed by their authors, even to be posthumous, prompted only by their love of study, and a patriotic zeal. Bishop KENNETT's stupendous "Register and Chronicle," volume I., is one of those astonishing labours, which could only have been produced by the pleasure of study urged by the strong love of posterity. It is a diary in which the bishop, one of our most studious and active authors, has recorded every matter of fact, "delivered in the words of the most authentic books, papers, and records." The design was to preserve our literary history from the Restoration. This silent labour he had been pursuing all his life, and published the first volume in his sixty-eighth year, the very year he died. But he was so sensible of the coyness of the public taste for what he calls in a letter to a literary friend, "a tedious heavy book," that he gave it away to the publisher. "The volume, too large, brings me no profit. In good truth, the scheme was laid for conscience' sake, to restore a good old principle that history should be purely matter of fact, that every reader, by examining and comparing, may make out a history by his own judgment. I have collections transcribed for another volume, if the bookseller will run the hazard of

printing." This volume has never appeared, and the bookseller probably lost a considerable sum by the one published, which valuable volume is now procured with difficulty.*

These laborious authors have commenced their literary life with a glowing ardour, though the feelings of genius have been obstructed by those numerous causes which occur too frequently in the life of a literary man.

Let us listen to STRUTT, whom we have just noticed, and let us learn what he proposed doing, in the first age of fancy.

Having obtained the first gold medal ever given at the Royal Academy, he writes to his mother, and thus thanks her and his friends for their deep interest in his success:—

"I will at least strive to the utmost, to give my benefactors no reason to think their pains thrown away. If I should not be able to abound in riches, yet, by God's help, I will strive to pluck that palm which the greatest artists of foregoing ages have done before me; *I will strive to leave my name behind me in the world, if not in the splendour that some have, at least with* some marks *of assiduity and study;* which, I can assure you, shall never be wanting in me. Who can bear to hear the names of Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, &c., the most famous of the Italian masters, in the mouth of every one, and not wish to be like them? And to be like them, we must study as they have done, take such pains, and labour continually like them; the which shall not be wanting on my side, I dare affirm; so that, should I not succeed, I may rest contented, and say I have done my utmost. God has blessed me with a mind to undertake. You, dear madam, will excuse my vanity; you know me, from my childish days, to have been a vain boy, always desirous to execute something to gain me praises from every one; always scheming and imitating whatever I saw done by anybody."

And when Strutt settled in the metropolis, and studied at the British Museum, amid all the stores of knowledge and art, his imagination delighted to expatiate in its future pros-

* See Bishop Kennet's letter in Nicholas "Life of Bowyer," vol. i. p. 383.

pects. In a letter to a friend he has thus chronicled his feelings:

"I would not only be a great antiquary, but a refined thinker; I would not only discover antiquities, but would, by explaining their use, render them useful. Such vast funds of knowledge lie hid in the antiquated remains of the earlier ages; these I would bring forth, and set in their true light."

Poor Strutt, at the close of life, was returning to his own first and natural energies, in producing a work of the imagination. He had made considerable progress in one, and the early parts which he had finished bear the stamp of genius; it is entitled "Queenhoo-hall, a Romance of ancient times," full of the picturesque manners and costume, and characters of the age, in which he was so conversant; with many lyrical pieces, which often are full of poetic feeling—but he was called off from the work to prepare a more laborious one. "Queenhoo-hall" remained a heap of fragments at his death; except the first volume, and was filled up by a stranger hand. The stranger was Sir Walter Scott, and "Queenhoo-hall" was the origin of that glorious series of romances where antiquarianism has taken the shape of imagination.

Writing on the calamities attached to literature, I must notice one of a more recondite nature, yet perhaps few literary agonies are more keenly felt. I would not excite an undue sympathy for a class of writers who are usually considered as drudges; but the present case claims our sympathy.

There are men of letters, who, early in life, have formed some favourite plan of literary labour, which they have unremittingly pursued, till, sometimes near the close of life, they either discover their inability to terminate it, or begin to depreciate their own constant labour. The literary architect has grown grey over his edifice; and, as if the black wand of enchantment had waved over it, the colonnades become interminable, the pillars seem to want a foundation, and all the rich materials he had collected together, lie before him in all the disorder of ruins. It may be urged that the reward of literary labour, like the consolations of virtue, must be drawn with all their sweetness from itself; or, that if the author be incompetent, he must pay the price of his incapacity. This

may be Stoicism, but it is not humanity. The truth is, there is always a latent love of fame, that prompts to this strong devotion of labour; and he who has given a long life to that which he has so much desired, and can never enjoy, might well be excused receiving our insults, if he cannot extort our pity.

A remarkable instance occurs in the fate of the late Rev. William Cole; he was the college friend of Walpole, Mason, and Gray; a striking proof how dissimilar habits and opposite tastes and feelings can associate in literary friendship; for Cole, indeed, the public had informed him that his friends were poets and men of wit; and for them, Cole's patient and curious turn was useful, and, by its extravagant trifling, must have been very amusing. He had a gossip's ear, and a tatler's pen—and, among better things, wrote down every grain of literary scandal his insatiable and minute curiosity could lick up; as patient and voracious as an ant-eater, he stretched out his tongue till it was covered by the tiny creatures, and drew them all in at one digestion. All these tales were registered with the utmost simplicity, as the reporter received them; but, being but tales, the exactness of his truth made them still more dangerous lies, by being perpetuated; in his reflections he spared neither friend nor foe; yet, still anxious after truth, and usually telling lies, it is very amusing to observe, that, as he proceeds, he very laudably contradicts or explains away in subsequent memoranda what he had before registered. Walpole, in a correspondence of forty years, he was perpetually flattering, though he must imperfectly have relished his fine taste, while he abhorred his more liberal principles to which sometimes he addressed a submissive remonstrance. He has at times written a letter coolly, and, at the same moment, chronicled his suppressed feelings in his diary, with all the flame and sputter of his strong prejudices. He was expressively nick-named Cardinal Cole. These scandalous chronicles, which only show the violence of his prejudices, without the force of genius, or the acuteness of penetration, were ordered not to be opened till twenty years after his decease; he wished to do as little mischief as he could, but loved to do some. I well remember the cruel

anxiety which prevailed in the nineteenth year of these inclosures; it spoiled the digestions of several of our literati who had had the misfortune of Cole's intimate friendship, or enmity. One of these was the writer of the Life of Thomas Baker, the Cambridge Antiquary, who prognosticated all the evil he among others was to endure, and, writhing in fancy under the whip not yet untwisted, justly enough exclaims in his agony, "The attempt to keep these characters from the public till the subjects of them shall be no more, seems to be peculiarly cruel and ungenerous, since it is precluding them from vindicating themselves from such injurious aspersions, as their friends, perhaps however willing, may at that distance of time be incapable of removing." With this author, Mr. Masters, Cole had quarrelled so often, that Masters writes, "I am well acquainted with the fickleness of his disposition for more than forty years past."

When the lid was removed from this Pandora's box, it happened that some of his intimate friends were alive to perceive in what strange figures they were exhibited by their quondam admirer!

Cole, however, bequeathed to the nation, among his unpublished works, a vast mass of antiquities and historical collections, and one valuable legacy of literary materials. When I turned ovér the papers of this literary antiquary, I found the recorded cries of a literary martyr.

Cole had passed a long life in the pertinacious labour of forming an "Athenæ Cantabrigienses," and other literary collections—designed as a companion to the work of Anthony Wood. These mighty labours exist in more than fifty folio volumes in his own writing. He began these collections about the year 1745; in a fly leaf of 1777, I found the following melancholy state of his feelings and a literary confession, as forcibly expressed as it is painful to read, when we consider that they are the wailings of a most zealous votary.

"In good truth, whoever undertakes this drudgery of an 'Athenæ Cantabrigienses,' must be contented with no prospect of credit and reputation to himself, and with the mortifying reflection that after all his pains and study, through life, he must be looked upon in a humble light, and only as a journey-

man to Anthony Wood, whose excellent book of the same sort will ever preclude any other, who shall follow him in the same track, from all hopes of fame; and will only represent him as an imitator of so original a pattern. For, at this time of day, all great characters, both Cantabrigians and Oxonians, are already published to the world, either in his book, or various others; so that the collection, unless the same characters are reprinted here, must be made up of second-rate persons, and the refuse of authorship.—However, as I have begun, and made so large a progress in this undertaking, *it is death to think of leaving it off*, though, from the former considerations, so little credit is to be expected from it."

Such were the fruits, and such the agonies, of nearly half a century of assiduous and zealous literary labour! Cole urges a strong claim to be noticed among our literary calamities. Another of his miseries was his uncertainty in what manner he should dispose of his collections: and he has put down this *naïve* memorandum—"I have long wavered how to dispose of all my MS. volumes; to give them to *King's College*, would be to throw them into a *horsepond;* and I had as lieve do one as the other; they are generally so *conceited of their Latin and Greek, that all other studies are barbarism*."

The dread of incompleteness has attended the life-labours (if the expression may be allowed) of several other authors who have never published their works. Such was the learned Bishop Lloyd, and the Rev. Thomas Baker, who was first engaged in the same pursuit as Cole, and carried it on to the extent of about forty volumes in folio. Lloyd is described by Burnet as having "many volumes of materials upon all subjects, so that he could, with very little labour, write on any of them, with more life in his imagination, and a truer judgment, than may seem consistent with such a laborious course of study; but he did not lay out his learning with the same diligence as he laid it in." It is mortifying to learn, in the words of Johnson, that "he was always hesitating and inquiring, raising objections and removing them, and waiting for clearer light and fuller discovery. Many of the labours of this learned bishop were at length consumed in the kitchen of his descendant. "Baker, (says Johnson), after many years

passed in biography, left his manuscripts to be buried in a library, because that was imperfect which could never be perfected." And to complete the absurdity, or to heighten the calamity which the want of these useful labours make every literary man feel, half of the collections of Baker sleep in their dust in a turret of the University; while the other, deposited in our national library at the British Museum, and frequently used, are rendered imperfect by this unnatural divorce.

I will illustrate the character of a laborious author by that of ANTHONY WOOD.

WOOD'S "Athenæ Oxonienses" is a history of near a thousand of our native authors; he paints their characters, and enters into the spirit of their writings. But authors of this complexion, and works of this nature, are liable to be slighted; for the fastidious are petulant, the volatile inexperienced, and those who cultivate a single province in literature are disposed, too often, to lay all others under a state of interdiction.

WARBURTON, in a work thrown out in the heat of unchastised youth, and afterwards withdrawn from public inquiry, has said of the "Athenæ Oxonienses"—

"Of all those writings given us by the learned Oxford antiquary, there is not one that is not a disgrace to letters; most of them are so to common sense, and some even to human nature. Yet how set out! how tricked! how adorned! how extolled!"*

The whole tenor of Wood's life testifies, as he himself tells us, that "books and MSS. formed his Elysium, and he wished to be dead to the world." This sovereign passion marked him early in life, and the image of death could not disturb it. When young, "he walked mostly alone, was given much to thinking and melancholy." The *delicia* of his life were the more liberal studies of painting and music, intermixed with those of antiquity; nor could his family, who checked such unproductive studies, ever check his love of them. With what a firm and noble spirit he says,

* In his "Critical and Philosophical Enquiry into the Causes of Prodigies."

"When he came to full years, he perceived it was his natural genie, and he could not avoid them—they crowded on him—he could never give a reason why he should delight in those studies, more than in others, so prevalent was nature, mixed with a generosity of mind, and a hatred to all that was servile, sneaking, or advantageous for lucre-sake."

These are not the roundings of a period, but the pure expressions of a man who had all the simplicity of childhood in his feelings. Could such vehement emotions have been excited in the unanimated breast of a clod of literature? Thus early Anthony Wood betrayed the characteristics of genius; nor did the literary passion desert him in his last moments. With his dying hands he still grasped his beloved papers, and his last mortal thoughts dwelt on his *Athenæ Oxonienses*.

It is no common occurrence to view an author speechless in the hour of death, yet fervently occupied by his posthumous fame. Two friends went into his study, to sort that vast multitude of papers, notes, letters—his more private ones he had ordered not to be opened for seven years; about two bushels full were ordered for the fire, which they had lighted for the occasion. "As he was expiring, he expressed both his knowledge and approbation of what was done by throwing out his hands."

Turn over his Herculean labour; do not admire less his fearlessness of danger, than his indefatigable pursuit of truth. He wrote of his contemporaries as if he felt a right to judge of them, and as if he were living in the succeeding age; courtier, fanatic, or papist, were much alike to honest Anthony; for he professes himself "such a universal lover of all mankind, that he wished there might be no cheat put upon readers and writers in the business of commendations. And (says he) since every one will have a double balance, one for his own party, and another for his adversary, all he could do, is to amass together what every side thinks will make best weight for themselves. Let posterity hold the scales."

Anthony might have added, "I have held them." This uninterrupted activity of his spirits was the action of a sage, not the bustle of one intent merely on heaping up a book.

"He never wrote in post, with his body and thoughts in a hurry, but in a fixed abode, and with a deliberate pen. And he never concealed an ungrateful truth, nor flourished over a weak place, but in sincerity of meaning and expression."

Anthony Wood cloistered an athletic mind, a hermit critic abstracted from the world, existing more with posterity than amid his contemporaries. His prejudices were the keener from the very energies of the mind that produced them; but, as he practices no deception on his reader, we know the causes of his anger or his love. And, as an original thinker creates a style for himself, from the circumstance of not attending to style at all, but to feeling, so Anthony Wood's has all the peculiarity of the writer. Critics of short views have attempted to screen it from ridicule, attributing his uncouth style to the age he lived in. But not one in his own time, nor since, has composed in the same style. The austerity and the quickness of his feelings, vigorously stamped all their roughness and vivacity on every sentence. He describes his own style as an "honest, plain English dress, without flourishes or affectation of style, as best becomes a history of truth and matters of fact. It is the first (work) of its nature that has ever been printed in our own, or in any other mother-tongue."

It is, indeed, an honest Montaigne-like simplicity. Acrimonious and cynical, he is always sincere, and never dull. Old Anthony to me is an admirable character-painter, for anger and love are often picturesque. And among our literary historians he might be compared, for the effect he produces, to Albert Durer, whose kind of antique rudeness has a sharp outline, neither beautiful nor flowing; and, without a genius for the magic of light and shade, he is too close a copier of Nature to affect us by ideal forms.

The independence of his mind nerved his ample volumes, his fortitude he displayed in the contest with the University itself, and his firmness in censuring Lord Clarendon, the head of his own party. Could such a work, and such an original manner, have proceeded from an ordinary intellect? Wit may sparkle, and sarcasm may bite; but the cause of literature is injured when the industry of such a mind is ranked with that of "the hewers of wood, and drawers of water;"

ponderous compilers, or creeping commentators. Such a work as the "Athenæ Oxonienses" involved in its pursuits some of the higher qualities of the intellect; a voluntary devotion of life, a sacrifice of personal enjoyments, a noble design combining many views, some present and some prescient, a clear vigorous spirit equally diffused over a vast surface. But it is the hard fate of authors of this class to be levelled with their inferiors!

Let us exhibit one more picture of the calamities of a laborious author, in the character of Joshua Barnes, editor of Homer, Euripides, and Anacreon, and the writer of a vast number of miscellaneous compositions in history and poetry. Besides the works he published, he left behind him nearly fifty unfinished ones; many were epic poems, all intended to be in twelve books, and some had reached their eighth! His folio volume of "The History of Edward III." is a labour of valuable research. He wrote with equal facility in Greek, Latin, and his own language, and he wrote all his days; and, in a word, having little or nothing but his Greek professorship, not exceeding forty pounds a year, Barnes, who had a great memory, a little imagination, and no judgment, saw the close of a life, devoted to the studies of humanity, settle around him in gloom and despair. The great idol of his mind was the edition of his Homer, which seems to have completed his ruin; he was haunted all his days with a notion that he was persecuted by envy, and much undervalued by the world; the sad consolation of the secondary and third-rate authors, who often die persuaded of the existence of ideal enemies. To be enabled to publish his Homer at an enormous charge, he wrote a poem, the design of which is to prove that Solomon was the author of the Iliad, and it has been said that this was done to interest his wife, who had some property, to lend her aid towards the publication of so divine a work. This happy pun was applied for his epitaph.—

Joshua Barnes,
Felicis memoriæ, judicium expectans.
Here lieth
Joshua Barnes,
OF HAPPY MEMORY, AWAITING JUDGMENT!

The year before he died he addressed the following letter to the Earl of Oxford, which I transcribe from the original. It is curious to observe how the veteran and unhappy scribbler, after his vows of retirement from the world of letters, thoroughly disgusted with "all human learning," gently hints to his patron, that he has ready for the press, a singular variety of contrasted works, yet even then he did not venture to disclose one-tenth part of his concealed treasures!

TO THE EARL OF OXFORD.

"My Hon. Lord, *Oct.* 16, 1711.

"This, not in any doubt of your goodness and high respect to learning, for I have fresh instances of it every day; but because I am prevented in my design of waiting personally on you, being called away by my business for Cambridge, to read Greek lectures this term; and my circumstances are pressing, being, through the combination of booksellers, and the meaner arts of others, too much prejudiced in the sale. I am not neither sufficiently ascertained whether my Homer and Letters came to your honour; surely the vast charges of that edition has almost broke my courage, there being much more trouble in putting off the impression, and contending with a subtle and unkind world, than in all the study and management of the press.

"Others, my Lord, are younger, and their hopes and helps are fresher; I have done as much in the way of learning as any man living, but have received less encouragement than any, having nothing but my Greek professorship, which is but forty pounds per annum, that I can call my own, and more than half of that is taken up by my expenses of lodging and diet in terme time at Cambridge.

"I was obliged to take up three hundred and fifty pounds on interest towards this last work, whereof I still owe two hundred pounds, and two hundred more for the printing; the whole expense arising to about one thousand pounds. I have lived in the university above thirty years, fellow of a college now above forty years standing, and fifty-eight years of age; am bachelor of divinity, and have preached before kings; but am now your honour's suppliant, and would fain

retire from the study of humane learning, which has been so little beneficial to me, if I might have a little prebend, or sufficient anchor to lay hold on; only I have two or three matters ready for the press—an ecclesiastical history, Latin; an heroic poem of the Black Prince, Latin; another of Queen Anne, English, finished; a treatise of Columnes, Latin; and an accurate treatise about Homer, Greek, Latin, &c. I would fain be permitted the honour to make use of your name in some one, or most of these, and to be, &c. JOSHUA BARNES."*

He died nine months afterwards. Homer did not improve in sale; and the sweets of patronage were not even tasted. This, then, is the history of a man of great learning, of the most pertinacious industry, but somewhat allied to the family of the *Scribleri*.

THE DESPAIR OF YOUNG POETS.

WILLIAM PATTISON was a young poet who perished in his twentieth year; his character and his fate resemble those of Chatterton. He was one more child of that family of genius whose passions, like the torch, kindle but to consume themselves.

The youth of Pattison was that of a poet. Many become irrecoverably poets by local influence; and Beattie could hardly have thrown his "Minstrel" into a more poetical solitude than the singular spot which was haunted by our young bard. His first misfortune was that of having an anti-poetical parent; his next was that of having discovered a spot which confirmed his poetical habits, inspiring all the melancholy and sensibility he loved to indulge. This spot, which in his fancy resembled some favourite description in Cowley, he called "Cowley's Walk." Some friend, who was himself no common painter of fancy, has delineated the whole scenery with minute touches, and a freshness of colouring, warm with reali-

* Harleian MSS. 7523.

ty. Such a poetical habitation becomes a part of the poet himself, reflecting his character, and even descriptive of his manners.

"On one side of 'Cowley's Walk,' is a huge rock, grown over with moss and ivy climbing on its sides, and in some parts small trees spring out of the crevices of the rock; at the bottom is a wild plantation of irregular trees, in every part looking aged and venerable. Among these cavities, one larger than the rest was the cave he loved to sit in: arched like a canopy, its rustic borders were edged with ivy hanging down, overshadowing the place, and hence he called it (for poets must give a name to every object they love) 'Hederinda,' bearing ivy. At the foot of this grotto a stream of water ran along the walk, so that its level path had trees and water on one side, and a wild rough precipice on the other. In winter, this spot looked full of horror—the naked trees, the dark rock, and the desolate waste; but in the spring, the singing of the birds, the fragrancy of the flowers, and the murmuring of the stream, blended all their enchantment."

Here, in the heat of the day, he escaped into the "Hederinda," and shared with friends his rapture and his solitude; and here, through summer nights, in the light of the moon he meditated and melodized his verses, by the gentle fall of the waters. Thus was Pattison fixed and bound up in the strongest spell the demon of poetry ever drew around a susceptible and careless youth.

He was now a decided poet. At Sidney College, in Cambridge, he was greatly loved; till, on a quarrel with a rigid tutor, he rashly cut his name out of the college book, and quitted it for ever in utter thoughtlessness and gaiety, leaving his gown behind, as his *locum tenens*, to make his apology, by pinning on it a satirical farewell.

> "Whoever gives himself the pains to stoop
> And take my venerable tatters up,
> To his presuming inquisition I,
> In *loco Pattisoni*, thus reply:
> 'Tired with the senseless jargon of the gown,
> My master left the college for the town,
> And scorns his precious minutes to regale
> With wretched college-wit and college-ale.'"

He flew to the metropolis, to take up the trade of a poet

A translation of Ovid's Epistles had engaged his attention during two years; his own genius seemed inexhaustible; and pleasure and fame were awaiting the poetical emigrant. He resisted all kind importunities to return to college; he could not endure submission, and declares "his spirit cannot bear control." One friend "fears the innumerable temptations to which one of his complexion is liable in such a populous place." Pattison was much loved; he had all the generous impetuosity of youthful genius; but he had resolved on running the perilous career of literary glory, and he added one more to the countless thousands who perish in obscurity.

His first letters are written with the same spirit that distinguishes Chatterton's; all he hopes he seems to realize. He mixes among the wits, dates from Button's, and drinks with Concanen healths to college friends, till they lose their own; more dangerous Muses condescend to exhibit themselves to the young poet in the Park; and he was to be introduced to Pope. All is exultation! Miserable youth! The first thought of prudence appears in a resolution of soliciting subscriptions from all persons, for a volume of poems.

His young friends at college exerted their warm patronage; those in his native North condemn him, and save their crowns; Pope admits of no interview, but lends his name, and bestows half-a-crown for a volume of poetry, which he did not want; the poet wearies kindness, and would extort charity even from brother-poets; petitions lords and ladies; and, as his wants grow on him, his shame decreases.

How the scene has changed in a few months! He acknowledges to a friend, that "his heart was broke through the misfortunes he had fallen under;" he declares "he feels himself near the borders of death." In moments like these, he probably composed the following lines, awfully addressed,

AD CŒLUM!

"Good heaven! this mystery of life explain,
Nor let me think I bear the load in vain;
Lest, with the tedious passage cheerless grown,
Urged by despair, I throw the burden down."

But the torture of genius, when all its passions are strained

on the rack, was never more pathetically expressed than in the following letter:—

"SIR,

"If you was ever touched with a sense of humanity, consider my condition; what I *am*, my proposals will inform you; what *I have been*, Sidney College, in Cambridge, can witness; but what *I shall be* some few hours hence, I tremble to think! Spare my blushes?—I have not enjoyed the common necessaries of life these two days, and can hardly hold to subscribe myself, Yours, &c."

The picture is finished—it admits not of another stroke. Such was the complete misery which Savage, Boyse, Chatterton, and more innocent spirits devoted to literature, have endured—but not long—for they must perish in their youth!

HENRY CAREY was one of our most popular poets; he, indeed, has unluckily met with only dictionary critics, or what is as fatal to genius, the cold undistinguishing commendation of grave men on subjects of humour, wit, and the lighter poetry. The works of Carey do not appear in any of our great collections, where Walsh, Duke, and Yalden slumber on the shelf.

Yet Carey was a true son of the Muses, and the most successful writer in our language. He is the author of several little national poems. In early life he successfully burlesqued the affected versification of Ambrose Philips, in his baby poems, to which he gave the fortunate appellation of "*Namby Pamby*, a panegyric on the new versification;" a term descriptive in sound of those chiming follies, and now become a technical term in modern criticism. Carey's "Namby Pamby" was at first considered by Swift as the satirical effusion of Pope, and by Pope as the humorous ridicule of Swift. His ballad of "Sally in our Alley" was more than once commended for its nature by Addison, and is sung to this day. Of the national song "God save the King," it is supposed he was the author both of the words and of the music. He was very successful on the stage, and wrote admirable burlesques of the Italian opera, in "The Dragon of Wantley," and "The Dragoness;" and the mock tragedy of "Chrononhotontholo-

gos" is not forgotten. Among his Poems lie still concealed several original pieces; those which have a political turn are particularly good, for the politics of Carey were those of a poet and a patriot. I refer the politician who has any taste for poetry and humour, to "The Grumbletonians, or the Dogs without doors, a Fable," very instructive to those grown-up folks, "The Inns and the Outs." "Carey's Wish" is in this class; and, as the purity of election remains still among the desiderata of every true Briton, a poem on that subject by the patriotic author of our national hymn of "God save the King" may be acceptable.

CAREY'S WISH.

"Cursed be the wretch that's bought and sold,
And barters liberty for gold;
For when election is not free,
In vain we boast of liberty:
And he who sells his single right,
Would sell his country, if he might.

When liberty is put to sale
For wine, for money, or for ale,
The sellers must be abject slaves,
The buyers vile designing knaves;
A proverb it has been of old,
The devil's bought but to be sold.

This maxim in the statesman's school
Is always taught, *divide and rule.*
All parties are to him a joke:
While zealots foam he fits the yoke.
Let men their reason once resume;
'Tis then the statesman's turn to fume.

Learn, learn, ye Britons, to unite;
Leave off the old exploded bite;
Henceforth let whig and tory cease,
And turn all party-rage to peace;
Rouse and revive your ancient glory,
Unite, and drive the world before you."

To the ballad of "Sally in our Alley" Carey has prefixed an argument so full of nature, that the song may derive an additional interest from its simple origin. The author assures

the reader that the popular notion that the subject of his ballad had been the noted Sally Salisbury, is perfectly erroneous, he being a stranger to her name at the time the song was composed.

"As innocence and virtue were ever the boundaries of his Muse, so in this little poem he had no other view than to set forth the beauty of a chaste and disinterested passion, even in the lowest class of human life. The real occasion was this: A shoemaker's prentice, making holiday with his sweetheart, treated her with a sight of Bedlam, the puppet-shows, the flying-chairs, and all the elegancies of Moorfields; from whence, proceeding to the Farthing Pye-house, he gave her a collation of buns, cheesecakes, gammon of bacon, stuffed beef, and bottled ale; through all which scenes the author dodged them (charmed with the simplicity of their courtship), from whence he drew this little sketch of Nature; but, being then young and obscure, he was very much ridiculed for this performance; which, nevertheless, made its way into the polite world, and amply recompensed him by the applause of the divine Addison, who was pleased (more than once) to mention it with approbation.

In "The Poet's Resentment" poor Carey had once forsworn "the harlot Muse:"—

> "Far, far away then chase the harlot Muse,
> Nor let her thus thy noon of life abuse;
> Mix with the common crowd, unheard, unseen,
> And if again thou temp'st the vulgar praise,
> Mayst thou be crown'd with birch instead of bays!"

Poets make such oaths in sincerity, and break them in rapture.

At the time that this poet could neither walk the streets nor be seated at the convivial board, without listening to his own songs and his own music—for, in truth, the whole nation was echoing his verse, and crowded theatres were applauding his wit and humour—while this very man himself, urged by his strong humanity, founded a "Fund for decayed Musicians"—he was so broken-hearted, and his own common comforts so utterly neglected, that, in despair, not waiting for nature to relieve him from the burden of existence, he laid violent hands

on himself; and when found dead, had only a halfpenny in his pocket! Such was the fate of the author of some of the most popular pieces in our language! He left a son, who inherited his misery, and a gleam of his genius.

THE MISERIES OF THE FIRST ENGLISH COMMENTATOR.

Dr. Zachary Grey, the editor of Hudibras, is the father of our modern commentators. His case is rather peculiar; I know not whether the father, by an odd anticipation, was doomed to suffer for the sins of his children, or whether his own have been visited on the third generation; it is certain that never was an author more overpowered by the attacks he received from the light and indiscriminating shafts of ignorant wits. He was ridiculed and abused for having assisted us to comprehend the wit of an author, which, without that aid, at this day would have been nearly lost to us; and whose singular subject involved persons and events which required the very thing he gave,—historical and explanatory notes.

A first thought, and all the danger of an original invention, which is always imperfectly understood by the superficial, was poor Dr. Grey's merit. He was modest and laborious, and he had the sagacity to discover what Butler wanted, and what the public required. His project was a happy thought, to commentate on a singular work which has scarcely a parallel in modern literature, if we except the "Satyre Ménippé" of the French, which is, in prose, the exact counterpart of Hudibras in rhyme; for our rivals have had the same state revolution, in which the same dramatic personages passed over their national stage, with the same incidents, in the civil wars of the ambitious Guises, and the citizen-reformers. They, too, found a Butler, though in prose, a Grey in Duchat, and, as well as they could, a Hogarth. An edition, which appeared in 1711, might have served as the model of Grey's Hudibras.

It was, however, a happy thought in our commentator, to turn over the contemporary writers to collect the events and

discover the personages alluded to by Butler; to read what the poet read, to observe what the poet observed. This was at once throwing himself and the reader back into an age, of which even the likeness had disappeared, and familiarizing us with distant objects, which had been lost to us in the haze and mists of time. For this, not only a new mode of travelling, but a new road, was to be opened; the secret history, the fugitive pamphlet, the obsolete satire, the ancient comedy—such were the many curious volumes whose dust was to be cleared away, to cast a new radiance on the fading colours of a moveable picture of manners; the wittiest ever exhibited to mankind. This new mode of research, even at this moment, is imperfectly comprehended, still ridiculed even by those who could never have understood a writer who will only be immortal in the degree he is comprehended—and whose wit could not have been felt but for the laborious curiosity of him whose "reading" has been too often aspersed for "such reading"

"As was never read."

Grey was outrageously attacked by all the wits, first by Warburton, in his preface to Shakespeare, who declares, that "he hardly thinks there ever appeared so execrable a heap of nonsense under the name of commentaries, as hath been lately given us on a certein satyric poet of the last age." It is odd enough, Warburton had himself contributed towards these very notes, but, for some cause which has not been discovered, had quarrelled with Dr. Grey. I will venture a conjecture on this great conjectural critic. Warburton was always meditating to give an edition of his own of our old writers, and the sins he committed against Shakespeare he longed to practise on Butler, whose times were, indeed, a favourite period of his researches. Grey had anticipated him—and though Warburton had half reluctantly yielded the few notes he had prepared, his proud heart sickened when he beheld the amazing subscription Grey obtained for his first edition of Hudibras; he received for that work 1500*l.**—a proof that this publication was felt as a want by the public.

* Cole's MSS.

Such, however, is one of those blunt, dogmatic censures in which Warburton abounds, to impress his readers with the weight of his opinions; this great man wrote more for effect than any other of our authors, as appears by his own or some friend's confession, that if his edition of Shakespeare did no honour to that bard, this was not the design of the commentator—which was only to do honour to himself by a display of his own exuberant erudition.

The poignant Fielding, in his preface to his "Journey to Lisbon," has a fling at the gravity of our doctor. "The laborious, much-read Dr. Z. Grey, of whose redundant notes on Hudibras I shall only say, that it is, I am confident, the single book extant in which above 500 authors are quoted, not one of which could be found in the collection of the late Dr. Mead." Mrs. Montague, in her letters, severely characterizes the miserable father of English commentators; she wrote in youth and spirits, with no knowledge of books, and *before* even the unlucky commentator had published his work, but wit is the bolder by anticipation.—She observes, that "his dulness may be a proper ballast for doggrel; and it is better that his stupidity should make jest dull than serious and sacred things ridiculous;" alluding to his numerous theological tracts.

Such then are the hard returns which some authors are doomed to receive as the rewards of useful labours from those who do not even comprehend their nature; a wit should not be admitted as a critic till he had first proved, by his gravity, or his dulness if he chooses, that he has some knowledge; for it is the privilege and nature of wit to write fastest and best on what it least understands. Knowledge only encumbers and confines its flights.

THE LIFE OF AN AUTHORESS.

Of all the sorrows in which the female character may participate, there are few more affecting than those of an Authoress;—often insulated and unprotected in society—with

all the sensibility of the sex, encountering miseries which break the spirits of men; with the repugnance arising from that delicacy which trembles when it quits its retirement.

My acquaintance with an unfortunate lady of the name of Eliza Ryves, was casual and interrupted; yet I witnessed the bitterness of "hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick." She sank, by the slow wastings of grief, into a grave which probably does not record the name of its martyr of literature.

She was descended from a family of distinction in Ireland; but as she expressed it, "she had been deprived of her birthright by the chicanery of law." In her former hours of tranquillity she had published some elegant odes, had written a tragedy and comedies; all which remained in MS. In her distress, she looked up to her pen as a source of existence; and an elegant genius, and a woman of polished manners, commenced the life of a female trader in literature.

Conceive the repulses of a modest and delicate woman in her attempts to appreciate the value of a manuscript with its purchaser. She has frequently returned from the booksellers to her dreadful solitude to hasten to her bed—in all the bodily pains of misery, she has sought in uneasy slumbers a temporary forgetfulness of griefs which were to recur on the morrow. Elegant literature is always of doubtful acceptance with the public, and Eliza Ryves came at length to try the most masculine exertions of the pen. She wrote for one newspaper much political matter; but the proprietor was too great a politician for the writer of politics, for he only praised the labour he never paid; much poetry for another, in which, being one of the correspondents of Della Crusca, in payment of her verses she got nothing but verses; the most astonishing exertion for a female pen was the entire composition of the historical and political portion of some Annual Register. So little profitable were all these laborious and original efforts, that every day did not bring its "daily bread." Yet even in her poverty her native benevolence could make her generous; for she has deprived herself of a meal, to provide with one, an unhappy family dwelling under the same roof.

Advised to adopt the mode of translation, and being igno-

rant of the French language, she retired to an obscure lodging at Islington, which she never quitted till she had produced a good version of Rousseau's "Social Compact," Raynal's "Letter to the National Assembly," and finally translated De la Croix's "Review of the Constitutions of the principal States in Europe," in two large volumes, with intelligent notes. All these works, so much at variance with her taste, left her with her health much broken, and a mind which might be said to have nearly survived the body.

Yet even at a moment so unfavourable, her ardent spirit engaged in a translation of Froissart. At the British Museum I have seen her conning over the magnificent and voluminous MS. of the old chronicler, and by its side Lord Berner's version, printed in the reign of Henry VIII. It was evident that his lordship was employed as a spy on Froissart, to inform her of what was going forward in the French camp; and she soon perceived, for her taste was delicate, that it required an ancient lord and knight, with all his antiquity of phrase, to break a lance with the still more ancient chivalric Frenchman. The familiar elegance of modern style failed to preserve the picturesque touches and the *naïve* graces of the chronicler, who wrote as the mailed knight combated—roughly or gracefully, as suited the tilt or the field. She vailed to Lord Berners; while she felt it was here necessary to understand old French, and then to write in old English.* During these profitless labours hope seemed to be whispering in her lonely study. Her comedies had been in possession of the managers of the theatres during several years. They had too much merit to be rejected, perhaps too little to be acted. Year passed over year, and the last still repeated the treacherous promise of its brother. The mysterious arts of procrastination are by no one so well systematized as by the theatrical manager, nor its secret sorrows so deeply felt as by the dramatist. One of her Comedies, "The Debt of Honour," had been warmly approved at both theatres—where probably a copy of it may still be found. To the honour of one of the managers, he presented her with a hundred pounds on his acceptance

* This version of Lord Berner's has been lately reprinted.

of it. Could she avoid then flattering herself with an annual harvest?

But even this generous gift, which involved in it such golden promises, could not for ten years preserve its delusion. "I feel," said Eliza Ryves, "the necessity of some powerful patronage, to bring my comedies forward to the world with *éclat*, and secure them an admiration which, should it even be deserved, is seldom bestowed, unless some leading judge of literary merit gives the sanction of his applause; and then the world will chime in with his opinion, without taking the trouble to inform themselves whether it be founded in justice or partiality." She never suspected that her comedies were not comic!—but who dare hold an argument with an ingenuous mind, when it reasons from a right principle, with a wrong application to itself? It is true that a writer's connexions have often done a great deal for a small author, and enabled some favourites of literary fashion to enjoy a usurped reputation; but it is not so evident that Eliza Ryves was a comic writer, although, doubtless, she appeared another Menander to herself. And thus an author dies in a delusion of self-flattery!

The character of Eliza Ryves was rather tender and melancholy, than brilliant and gay; and like the bruised perfume—breathing sweetness when broken into pieces. She traced her sorrows in a work of fancy, where her feelings were at least as active as her imagination. It is a small volume, entiled "The Hermit of Snowden." Albert, opulent and fashionable, feels a passion for Lavinia, and meets the kindest return; but, having imbibed an ill opinion of women from his licentious connexions, he conceived they were slaves of passion, or of avarice. He wrongs the generous nature of Lavinia, by suspecting her of mercenary views; hence arise the perplexities of the hearts of both. Albert affects to be ruined, and spreads the report of an advantageous match. Lavinia feels all the delicacy of her situation; she loves, but "she never told her love." She seeks for her existence in her literary labours, and perishes in want.

In the character of Lavinia, our authoress, with all the melancholy sagacity of genius, foresaw and has described

her own death!—the dreadful solitude to which she was latterly condemned, when in the last stage of her poverty; her frugal mode of life; her acute sensibility; her defrauded hopes; and her exalted fortitude. She has here formed a register of all that occurred in her solitary existence. I will give one scene,—to me it is pathetic,—for it is like a scene at which I was present:

"Lavinia's lodgings were about two miles from town, in an obscure situation. I was showed up to a mean apartment, where Lavinia was sitting at work, and in a dress which indicated the greatest economy. I inquired what success she had met with in her dramatic pursuits. She waved her head, and, with a melancholy smile, replied, 'that her hopes of ever bringing any piece on the stage were now entirely over; for she found that more interest was necessary for the purpose than she could command, and that she had for that reason laid aside her comedy for ever!' While she was talking, came in a favourite dog of Lavinia's, which I had used to caress. The creature sprang to my arms, and I received him with my usual fondness. Lavinia endeavoured to conceal a tear which trickled down her cheek. Afterwards she said, 'Now that I live entirely alone, I show Juno more attention than I had used to do formerly. *The heart wants something to be kind to!*—And it consoles us for the loss of society, to see even an animal derive happiness from the endearments we bestow upon it.'"

Such was Eliza Ryves! not beautiful nor interesting in her person, but with a mind of fortitude, susceptible of all the delicacy of feminine softness, and virtuous amid her despair.

THE INDISCRETION OF A HISTORIAN.

THOMAS CARTE.

"CARTE," says Mr. Hallam, "is the most exact historian we have;" and Daines Barrington prefers his authority to

that of any other, and many other writers confirm this opinion. Yet, had this historian been an ordinary compiler, he could not have incurred a more mortifying fate; for he was compelled to retail in shilling numbers that invaluable history which we have only learned of late times to appreciate, and which was the laborious fruits of self-devotion.

Carte was the first of our historians who had the sagacity and the fortitude to ascertain where the true sources of our history lie. He discovered a new world, beyond the old one of our research, and not satisfied in gleaning the *res historica* from its original writers, a merit which has not always been possessed by some of our popular historians, Carte opened those subterraneous veins of secret history from whence even the original writers of our history, had they possessed them, might have drawn fresh knowledge and more ample views. Our domestic or civil history was scarcely attempted till Carte planned it; while all his laborious days and his literary travels on the Continent were absorbed in the creation of a *History of England*, and of a *Public Library* in the metropolis, for we possessed neither. A diligent foreigner, Rapin, had compiled our history, and had opportunely found in the vast collection of Rymer's "Fœdera" a rich accession of knowledge; but a foreigner could not sympathize with the feelings, or even understand the language, of the domestic story of our nation; our rolls and records, our state-letters, the journals of parliament, and those of the privy-council; an abundant source of private memoirs; and the hidden treasures in the state-paper office, the Cottonian and Harleian libraries; all these, and much besides, the sagacity of Carte contemplated. He had further been taught—by his own examination of the true documents of history, which he found preserved among the ancient families of France, who with a warm patriotic spirit, worthy of imitation, "often carefully preserved in their families the acts of their ancestors;" and the *trésor des chartes* and the *dépôt pour les affaires éstrangères* (the state-paper office of France),—that the history of our country is interwoven with that of its neighbours, as well as with that of our own countrymen.*

* It is much to the honour of Carte, that the French acknowledge

Carte, with these enlarged views, and firm with diligence which never paused, was aware that such labours—both for the expense and assistance they demand—exceeded the powers of a private individual; but, "what a single man cannot do," he said, "may be easily done by a society, and the value of an opera subscription would be sufficient to patronize a History of England." His valuable "History of the Duke of Ormond" had sufficiently announced the sort of man who solicited this necessary aid; nor was the moment unpropitious to his fondest hopes, for a *Society for the Encouragement of Learning* had been formed, and this impulse of public spirit, however weak, had, it would seem, roused into action some unexpected quarters. When Carte's project was made known, a large subscription was raised to defray the expense of transcripts, and afford a sufficient independence to the historian; many of the nobility and the gentry subscribed ten or twenty guineas annually, and several of the corporate bodies in the city honourably appeared as the public patrons of the literature of their nation. He had, perhaps, nearly a thousand a year subscribed, which he employed on the History. Thus everything promised fair both for the history and for the historian of our fatherland, and about this time he zealously published another proposal for the erection of a public library in the Mansion-house. "There is not," observed Carte, "a great city in Europe so ill-provided with public libraries as London." He enters into a very interesting and minute narrative of the public libraries of Paris.* He then also suggested the purchase of ten thousand manuscripts of the Earl of Oxford, which the nation now possess in the Harleian collection.

Though Carte failed to persuade our opulent citizens to purchase this costly honour, it is probably to his suggestion that the nation owes the British Museum. The ideas of the literary man are never thrown away, however vain at the moment, or however profitless to himself. Time preserves with-

that his publication of the *Rolles Gascognes* gave to them the first idea of their learned work, the *Notice des Diplomes.*

* This paper, which is a great literary curiosity, is preserved by Mr. Nichols in his Literary History, vol. ii.

out injuring the image of his mind, and a following age often performs what the preceding failed to comprehend.

It was in 1743 that this work was projected, in 1747 the first volume appeared. One single act of indiscretion, an unlucky accident rather than a premeditated design, overturned in a moment this monument of history;—for it proved that our Carte, however enlarged were his views of what history ought to consist, and however experienced in collecting its most authentic materials, and accurate in their statement, was infected by a superstitious jacobitism, which seemed likely to spread itself through his extensive history. Carte indeed was no philosopher, but a very faithful historian.

Having unhappily occasion to discuss whether the King of England had, from the time of Edward the Confessor, the power of healing inherent in him before his unction, or whether the gift was conveyed by ecclesiastical hands, to show the efficacy of the royal touch, he added an idle story, which had come under his own observation, of a person who appeared to have been so healed. Carte said of this unlucky personage, so unworthily introduced five hundred years before he was born, that he had been sent to Paris to be touched by "the eldest lineal descendant of a race of kings who had indeed for a long succession of ages cured that distemper by the royal touch." The insinuation was unquestionably in favour of the Pretender, although the name of the prince was not avowed, and was a sort of promulgation of the right divine to the English throne.

The first news our author heard of his elaborate history was the discovery of this unforeseen calamity; the public indignation was roused, and subscribers, public and private, hastened to withdraw their names. The historian was left forlorn and abandoned amid his extensive collections, and Truth, which was about to be drawn out of her well by this robust labourer, was no longer imagined to lie concealed at the bottom of the waters.

Thunderstruck at this dreadful reverse to all his hopes, and witnessing the unquitted labour of more than thirty years withered in an hour, the unhappy Carte drew up a faint appeal; rendered still more weak by a long and improbable tale,

that the objectionable illustration had been merely a private note which by mistake had been printed, and only designed to show that the person who had been healed, improperly attributed his cure to the sanative virtue of the regal unction; since the prince in question had never been anointed. But this was plunging from Scylla into Charybdis, for it inferred that the Stuarts inherited the heavenly-gifted touch by descent. This could not avail; yet heavy was the calamity! for now a historian of the utmost probity and exactness, and whose labours were never equalled for their scope and extent, was ruined for an absurd but not peculiar opinion, and an indiscretion which was more ludicrous than dishonest.

This shock of public opinion was met with a fortitude which only strong minds experience; Carte was the true votary of study,—by habit, by devotion, and by pleasure, he persevered in producing an invaluable folio every two years; but from three thousand copies he was reduced to seven hundred and fifty, and the obscure patronage of the few who knew to appreciate them. Death only arrested the historian's pen—in the fourth volume. We have lost the important period of the reign of the second Charles, of which Carte declared that he had read "a series of memoirs from the beginning to the end of that reign which would have laid open all those secret intrigues which Burnet with all his genius for conjecture does not pretend to account for."

So precious were the MS. collections Carte left behind him, that the proprietor valued them at 1500*l.*; Philip Earl of Hardwicke paid 200*l.* only for the perusal, and Macpherson a larger sum for their use; and Hume, without Carte, would scarcely have any authorities. Such was the calamitous result of Carte's historical labours, who has left others of a more philosophical cast, and of a finer taste in composition, to reap the harvest whose soil had been broken by his hands.

LITERARY RIDICULE,

ILLUSTRATED BY SOME ACCOUNT OF A LITERARY SATIRE.

RIDICULE may be considered as a species of eloquence; it has all its vehemence, all its exaggeration, all its power of diminution; it is irresistible! Its business is not with truth, but with its appearance; and it is this similitude, in perpetual comparison with the original, which, raising contempt, produces the ridiculous.

There is nothing real in ridicule; the more exquisite, the more it borrows from the imagination. When directed towards an individual, by preserving a unity of character in all its parts, it produces a fictitious personage, so modelled on the prototype, that we know not to distinguish the true one from the false. Even with an intimate knowledge of the real object, the ambiguous image slides into our mind, for we are at least as much influenced in our opinions by our imagination, as by our judgment. Hence some great characters have come down to us, spotted with the taints of indelible wit; and a satirist of this class, sporting with distant resemblances and fanciful analogies, has made the fictitious accompany for ever the real character. Piqued with Akenside, for some reflections against Scotland, Smollett has exhibited a man of great genius and virtue as a most ludicrous personage; and who can discriminate, in the ridiculous physician in "Peregrine Pickle," what is real from what is fictitious?*

* Of AKENSIDE few particulars have been recorded, for the friend who best knew him was of so cold a temper with regard to public opinion, that he has not, in his account, revealed a solitary feature in the character of the Poet. Yet Akenside's mind and manners were of a fine romantic cast, drawn from the moulds of classical antiquity. Such was the charm of his converse, that he even heated the cold and sluggish mind of Sir John Hawkins, who has, with unusual vivacity, described a day spent with him in the country. As I have mentioned the fictitious physician in Peregrine Pickle, let the same page show the real one. I shall transcribe Sir John's forgotten words—omitting his "neat and elegant dinner;"—"Akenside's conversation was of the most delightful kind, learned, instructive, and, without any affectation of wit, cheerful

The banterers and ridiculers possess this provoking advantage over sturdy honesty or nervous sensibility—their amusing fictions affect the world more than the plain tale that would put them down. They excite our risible emotions, while they are reducing their adversary to contempt—otherwise they would not be distinguished from gross slanderers. When the wit has gained over the laughers on his side, he has struck a blow which puts his adversary *hors de combat*. A grave reply can never wound ridicule, which, assuming all forms, has really none. Witty calumny and licentious raillery are airy nothings that float about us, invulnerable from their very nature, like those chimeras of hell which the sword of Æneas could not pierce—yet these shadows of truth, these false images, these fictitious realities, have made heroism tremble, turned the eloquence of wisdom into folly, and bowed down the spirit of honour itself.

Not that the legitimate use of RIDICULE is denied: the wisest men have been some of the most exquisite ridiculers; from Socrates to the Fathers, and from the Fathers to Erasmus, and from Erasmus to Butler and Swift. Ridicule is more efficacious than argument; when that keen instrument cuts what cannot be untied. "The Rehearsal" wrote down the unnatural taste for the rhyming heroic tragedies, and brought the nation back from sound to sense, from rant to passion. More important events may be traced in the history of Ridicule. When a certain set of intemperate Puritans, in the reign of Elizabeth, the ridiculous reformists of abuses in church

and entertaining. One of the pleasantest days of my life I passed with him, Mr. Dyson, and another friend, at Putney—where the enlivening sunshine of a summer's day, and the view of an unclouded sky, were the least of our gratifications. In perfect good-humour with himself and all about him, he seemed to feel a joy that he lived, and poured out his gratulations to the great Dispenser of all felicity, in expressions that Plato himself might have uttered on such an occasion. In conversation with select friends, and those whose studies had been nearly the same with his own, it was a usual thing with him, in libations to the memory of eminent men among the ancients, to bring their characters into view, and expatiate on those particulars of their lives that had rendered them famous." Observe the arts of the ridiculer! he seized on the romantic enthusiasm of Akenside, and turned it to *the cookery of the ancients!*

and state, congregated themselves under the literary *nom de guerre* of *Martin Mar-prelate*, a stream of libels ran throughout the nation. The grave discourses of the archbishop and the prelates could never silence the hardy and concealed libellers. They employed a moveable printing-press, and the publishers perpetually shifting their place, long escaped detection. They declared their works were "printed in Europe, not far from some of the bouncing priests;" or they were "printed over sea, in Europe, within two furlongs of a bouncing priest, at the cost and charges of Martin Mar-prelate, gent." It was then that Tom Nash, whom I am about to introduce to the reader's more familiar acquaintance, the most exquisite banterer of that age of genius, turned on them their own weapons, and annihilated them into silence when they found themselves paid in their own base coin. He rebounded their popular ribaldry on themselves, with such replies as "Pap with a hatchet, or a fig for my god-son; or, crack me this nut. To be sold, at the sign of the Crab-tree Cudgel, in Thwack-coat lane."* Not less biting was his "Almond for a Parrot, or an Alms for Martin." Nash first silenced *Martin Mar-prelate*, and the government afterwards hanged him; Nash might be vain of the greater honour. A ridiculer then is the best champion to meet another ridiculer; their scurrilities magically undo each other.

But the abuse of ridicule is not one of the least calamities of literature, when it withers genius, and gibbets whom it ought to enshrine. Never let us forget that Socrates before his judges asserted, "that his persecution originated in the licensed raillery of Aristophanes, which had so unduly influenced the popular mind during *several years!*" And thus a fictitious Socrates, not the great moralist, was condemned. Armed with the most licentious ridicule, the Aretine of our own country and times has proved that its chief magistrate was not protected by the shield of domestic and public virtues; a false and distorted image of an intelligent monarch

* This pamphlet has been ascribed to John Lilly, but it must be confessed that its native vigour strangely contrasts with the famous *Euphuism* of that refined writer.

could cozen the gross many, and aid the purposes of the subtle few.

There is a plague-spot in ridicule, and the man who is touched with it, can be sent forth as the jest of his country.

The literary reign of Elizabeth, so fertile in every kind of genius, exhibits a remarkable instance, in the controversy between the witty Tom Nash and the learned Gabriel Harvey. It will illustrate the nature of *the fictions of ridicule*, expose the materials of which its shafts are composed, and the secret arts by which ridicule can level a character which seems to be placed above it.

Gabriel Harvey was an author of considerable rank, but with two learned brothers, as Wood tells us, "had the ill luck to fall into the hands of that noted and restless buffoon, Tom Nash."

Harvey is not unknown to the lover of poetry, from his connexion with Spenser, who loved and revered him. He is the Hobynol whose poem is prefixed to the Faery Queen, who introduced Spenser to Sir Philip Sidney: and, besides his intimacy with the literary characters of his times, he was a Doctor of Laws, an erudite scholar, and distinguished as a poet. Such a man could hardly be contemptible; and yet, when some little peculiarities become aggravated, and his works are touched by the caustic of the most adroit banterer of that age of wit, no character has descended to us with such grotesque deformity, exhibited in so ludicrous an attitude.

Harvey was a pedant, but pedantry was part of the erudition of an age when our national literature was passing from its infancy; he introduced hexameter verses into our language, and pompously laid claim to an invention which, designed for the reformation of English verse, was practised till it was found sufficiently ridiculous. His style was infected with his pedantic taste, and the hard outline of his satirical humour betrays the scholastic cynic, not the airy and fluent wit. He had, perhaps, the foibles of a man who was clearing himself from obscurity; he prided himself on his family alliances, while he fastidiously looked askance on the trade of his father, a rope-manufacturer. He was somewhat rich in his apparel, according to the rank in society he held; and, hungering

after the notice of his friends, they fed him on soft sonnet and relishing dedication, till Harvey ventured to publish a collection of panegyrics on himself—and thus gravely stepped into a niche erected to Vanity. At length he and his two brothers, one a divine and the other a physician, became students of astronomy; then an astronomer usually ended in an almanac-maker, and above all, in an astrologer;—an avocation which tempted a man to become a prophet. Their "sharp and learned judgment on earthquakes" drove the people out of their senses (says Wood); but when nothing happened of their predictions, the brothers received a severe castigation from those great enemies of prophets, the wits. The buffoon, Tarleton, celebrated for his extempore humour, jested on them at the theatre; Elderton, a drunken ballad-maker, "consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing in bear-bating them with bundles of ballads." One on the earthquake commenced with "Quake! quake! quake!" They made the people laugh at their false terrors, or, as Nash humorously describes their fanciful panic, "when they sweated and were not a haire the worse." Thus were the three learned brothers beset by all the town-wits; Gabriel had the hardihood, with all undue gravity, to charge pell-mell among the whole knighthood of drollery; a circumstance probably alluded to by Spenser, in a sonnet addressed to Harvey:

> "Harvey, the happy above happier men,
> I read; that sitting like a looker-on
> Of this world's stage, does note with *critique pen*
> The sharp dislikes of each condition;
> And, as one carelesse of suspition,
> Ne fawnest for the favour of the great;
> *Ne fearest foolish reprehension*
> *Of faulty men, which daunger to thee threat,*
> But freely doest of what thee list, entreat,
> Like a great lord of peerlesse liberty—"

The "foolish reprehension of faulty men, threatening Harvey with danger," describes that gregarious herd of town-wits in the age of Elizabeth; Kit Marlow, Robert Greene, Dekker, Nash, &c.; men of no moral principle, of high passions, and the most pregnant Lucianic wits who ever flour-

ished at one period.* Unfortunately for the learned Harvey, his "critique pen," which is strange in so polished a mind and so curious a student, indulged a sharpness of invective which would have been peculiar to himself, had his adversary, Nash, not quite outdone him. Their pamphlets foamed against each other, till Nash, in his vehement invective, involved the whole generation of the Harveys, made one brother more ridiculous than the other, and even attainted the fair name of Gabriel's respectable sister. Gabriel, indeed, after the death of Robert Greene, the crony of Nash, sitting like a vampire on his grave, sucked blood from his corpse, in a memorable narrative of the debaucheries and miseries of this town-wit.. I throw into the note the most awful satirical address I ever read.† It became necessary to dry up the floodgates of these rival ink-horns, by an order of the Arch-

* Harvey, in the title-page of his "Pierce's Supererogation," has placed an emblematic woodcut, expressive of his own confidence, and his contempt of the wits. It is a lofty palm-tree, with its durable and impenetrable trunk; at its feet lie a heap of serpents, darting their tongues, and filthy toads, in vain attempting to pierce or to pollute it. The Italian motto, wreathed among the branches of the palm, declares, *Il vostro malignare non giova nulla;* Your malignity avails nothing.

† Among those Sonnets, in Harvey's "Foure Lettres, and certaine Sonnets, especially touching Robert Greene and other parties by him abused, 1592," there is one, which, with great originality of conception, has an equal vigour of style, and causticity of satire, on Robert Greene's death. John Harvey the physician, who was then dead, is thus made to address the town-wit, and the libeller of himself and his family. If Gabriel was the writer of this singular Sonnet, as he undoubtedly is of the verses to Spenser, subscribed Hobynol, it must be confessed he is a Poet, which he never appears in his English hexameters:—

JOHN HARVEY the Physician's Welcome to ROBERT GREENE!

"Come, fellow Greene, come to thy gaping grave,
Bid vanity and foolery farewell,
That ouerlong hast plaid the mad-brained knaue,
And ouerloud hast rung the bawdy bell.
Vermine to vermine must repair at last;
No fitter house for busie folke to dwell;
Thy conny-catching pageants are past,‡
Some other must those arrant stories tell;

‡ Greene had written "The Art of Coney-catching," a great adept in the arts of a town-life.

bishop of Canterbury. The order is a remarkable fragment of our literary history, and is thus expressed: "That all Nashe's bookes and Dr. Harvey's bookes be taken whereso-ever they may be found, and that none of the said bookes be ever printed hereafter."

This extraordinary circumstance accounts for the excessive rarity of Harvey's "Foure Lettres, 1592," and that literary scourge of Nash's, "Have with you to Saffron-Walden (Harvey's residence), or Gabriel Harvey's hunt is vp, 1596;" pamphlets now as costly as if they consisted of leaves of gold.

Nash, who, in his other works, writes in a style as flowing as Addison's, with hardly an obsolete vestige, has rather injured this literary invective, by the evident burlesque he affects of Harvey's pedantic idiom; and for this Mr. Malone has hastily censured him, without recollecting the aim of this modern Lucian.* The delicacy of irony; the *sous-entendu*, that subtlety of indicating what is not told; all that poignant satire, which is the keener for its polish, were not practised by our first vehement satirists; but a bantering masculine humour, a style stamped in the heat of fancy, with all the life-touches of strong individuality, characterize these licentious wits. They wrote then as the old *fabliers* told their tales, naming everything by its name; our refinement cannot ap-

> These hungrey wormes think long for their repast;
> Come on; I pardon thy offence to me;
> It was thy living; be not so aghast!
> A fool and a physitian may agree!
> And for my brothers never vex thyself;
> They are not to disease a buried elfe."

* Nash was a great favourite with the wits of his day. One calls him "our true English Aretine," another, "Sweet satyric Nash," a third describes his Muse as "armed with a gag-tooth (a tusk), and his pen possessed with Hercules's furies." He is well characterized in "The Return from Parnassus."

> "His style was witty, tho' he had some gall;
> Something he might have mended, so may all;
> Yet this I say, that for *a mother's wit*,
> Few men have ever seen the like of it."

Nash abounds with "Mother-wit;" but he was also educated at the University, with every advantage of classical studies.

prove, but it cannot diminish their real nature, and among our elaborate graces, their *naiveté* must be still wanting.

In this literary satire NASH has interwoven a kind of ludicrous biography of Harvey; and seems to have anticipated the character of Martinus Scriblerus. I leave the grosser parts of this invective untouched; for my business is not with *slander*, but with *ridicule*.

Nash opens as a skilful lampooner; he knew well that ridicule, without the appearance of truth, was letting fly an arrow upwards, touching no one. Nash accounts for his protracted silence by adroitly declaring, that he had taken these two or three years to get perfect intelligence of Harvey's "Life and conversation; one true point whereof well sat downe will more excrutiate him than *knocking him about the ears with his own style* in a hundred sheets of paper."

And with great humour says—

"As long as it is since he writ against me, so long have I given him a lease of his life, and he hath only held it by my mercy; and now let him thank his friends for this heavy load of disgrace I lay upon him, since I do it but to show my sufficiency; and they urging what a triumph he had over me, hath made me ransack my standish more than I would."

In the history of such a literary hero as Gabriel, the birth has ever been attended by portents. Gabriel's mother "dreamt a dream," that she was delivered "of an immense elder gun that can shoot nothing but pellets of chewed paper; and thought, instead of a boy, she was brought to bed of one of those kistrel birds called a wind-sucker." At the moment of his birth came into the world "a calf with a double tongue and ears longer than any asse's, with his feet turned backwards." Facetious analogies of Gabriel's literary genius!

He then paints to the life the grotesque portrait of Harvey; so that the man himself stands alive before us.—"He was of an adust swarth choleric dye, like restie bacon, or a dried scate-fish; his skin riddled and crumpled like a piece of burnt parchment, with channels and creases in his face, and wrinkles and frets of old age." Nash dexterously attributes this premature old age to his own talents; exulting humourously—

"I have brought him low, and shrewdly broken him; look on his head, and you shall find a gray haire for euerie line I have writ against him; and you shall haue all his beard white too by the time he hath read ouer this booke."

To give a finishing to the portrait, and to reach the climax of personal contempt, he paints the sordid misery in which he lived at Saffron-Walden;—"Enduring more hardness than a camell, who will liue four days without water, and feedes on nothing but thistles and wormwood, as he feeds on his estate on trotters, sheep porknells, and buttered rootes, in an hexameter meditation."

In his Venetian velvet and pantofles of pride we are told—

"He looks, indeed, like a case of tooth-pickes, on a lute-pin stuck in a suit of apparell. An Vsher of a dancing schoole, he is such a *basia de vmbra de vmbra de los pedes;* a kisser of the shadow of your feetes shadow he is!"

This is, doubtless, a portrait resembling the original, with its Cervantic touches; Nash would not have risked what the eyes of his readers would instantly have proved to be fictitious; and, in fact, though the *Grangerites* know of no portrait of Gabriel Harvey, they will find a wood-cut of him by the side of this description; it is, indeed, in a most pitiable attitude, expressing that gripe of criticism which seized on Gabriel "upon the news of the going in hand of my booke."

The ponderosity and prolixity of Gabriel's "period of a mile," are described with a facetious extravagance, which may be given as a specimen of the eloquence of ridicule. Harvey entitled his various pamphlets "Letters."—

"More letters yet from the doctor? Out upon it, here's a packet of epistling, as bigge as a packe of woollen cloth, or a stack of salt fish. Carrier, didst thou bring it by wayne, or by horsebacke? By wayne, sir, and it hath crackt me three axle-trees.—*Heavie* news! Take them again! I will never open them.—My cart (quoth he deep-sighing) hath cryde creake under them fortie times euerie furlong; wherefore if you be a good man rather make mud-walls with them, mend high-ways, or damme up quagmires with them.

"When I came to unrip and umbumbast this *Gargantuan* bag pudding, and found nothing in it but dogs tripes, swines

livers, oxe galls, and sheeps guts, I was in a bitterer chafe than anie cooke at a long sermon, when his meat burnes.

"O 'tis an vnconscionable vast gor-bellied volume, bigger bulkt than a Dutch hoy, and more cumbersome than a payre of Switzer's galease breeches."

And in the same ludicrous style he writes—

"One epistle thereof to John Wolfe (Harvey's printer) I took and weighed in an ironmonger's scale, and it counter poyseth a cayde* of herrings with three Holland cheeses. It was rumoured about the Court that the guard meant to trie masteries with it before the Queene, and instead of throwing the sledge, or the hammer, to hurle it foorth at the armes end for a wager.

"Sixe and thirtie sheets it comprehendeth, which with him is but sixe and thirtie full pointes (periods); for he makes no more difference 'twixt a sheet of paper and a full pointe, than there is 'twixt two black puddings for a pennie, and a pennie for a pair of black puddings. Yet these are but the shortest prouerbes of his wit, for he never bids a man good morrow, but he makes a speech as long as a proclamation, nor drinks to anie, but he reads a lecture of three hours long, *de Arte bibendi*. O 'tis a precious apothegmatical pedant."

It was the foible of Harvey to wish to conceal the humble avocation of his father: this forms a perpetual source of the bitterness or the pleasantry of Nash, who, indeed, calls his pamphlet "a full answer to the eldest son of the halter maker," which he says, "is death to Gabriel to remember; wherefore from time to time he doth nothing but turmoile his thoughts how to invent new pedigrees, and what great nobleman's bastard he was likely to be, not whose sonne he is reputed to be. Yet he would not have a shoo to put on his foote if his father had not traffiqued with the hangman. Harvey nor his brothers cannot bear to be called the sonnes of a rope-maker, which, by his private confession to some of my friends, was the only thing that most set him afire against me. Turne over his two bookes he hath published against me, wherein he hath clapt paper God's plentie, if that could press a man to death, and see if, in the

* A cade is 500 herrings; a great quantity of an article of no value!

waye of answer, or otherwise, he once mentioned *the word rope-maker*, or come within forty foot of it; except in one place of his first booke, where he nameth it not neither, but goes thus cleanly to worke:—'and may not a good sonne have a reprobate for his father?' a periphrase of a rope-maker, which, if I should shryue myself, I never heard before." According to Nash, Gabriel took his oath before a justice, that his father was an honest man, and kept his sons at the Universities a long time. "I confirmed it, and added, Ay! which is more, three proud sonnes, that when they met the hangman, their father's best customer, would not put off their hats to him—"

Such repeated raillery on this foible of Harvey touched him more to the quick, and more raised the public laugh, than any other point of attack; for it was merited. Another foible was, perhaps, the finical richness of Harvey's dress, adopting the Italian fashions on his return from Italy, "when he made no bones of taking the wall of Sir Philip Sidney, in his black Venetian velvet." On this the fertile invention of Nash raises a scandalous anecdote concerning Gabriel's wardrobe; "a tale of his hobby-horse reuelling and domineering at Audley-end, when the Queen was there; to which place Gabriel came ruffling it out, hufty tufty, in his suit of velvet—" which he had "untrussed, and pelted the outside from the lining of an old velvet saddle he had borrowed!"—"The rotten mould of that worm-eaten relique, he means, when he dies, to hang over his tomb for a monument."* Harvey was proud of his refined skill in "Tuscan authors," and too fond of their worse conceits. Nash alludes to his travels in Italy, "to fetch him twopenny worth of Tuscanism, quite renouncing his natural English accents and gestures, wrested himself wholly to the Italian punctilious, painting himself like a courtezan, till the Queen declared, 'he looked something like an Italian!' At which he roused his plumes,

* This unlucky Venetian velvet coat of Harvey had also produced a "Quippe for an Vpstart Courtier, or a quaint dispute between Velvet-breeches and Cloth-breeches," which poor Harvey declares was "one of the most licentious and intolerable invectives." This blow had been struck by Greene on the "Italianated" Courtier.

pricked his ears, and run away with the bridle betwixt his teeth." These were malicious tales, to make his adversary contemptible, whenever the merry wits at court were willing to sharpen themselves on him.

One of the most difficult points of attack was to break through that bastion of sonnets and panegyrics with which Harvey had fortified himself by the aid of his friends, against the assaults of Nash. Harvey had been commended by the learned and the ingenious. Our Lucian, with his usual adroitness, since he could not deny Harvey's intimacy with Spenser and Sidney, gets rid of their suffrages by this malicious sarcasm: "It is a miserable thing for a man to be said to have had friends, and now to have neer a one left!"—As for the others, whom Harvey calls "his gentle and liberal friends," Nash boldly caricatures the grotesque crew, as "tender itchie brained infants, that cared not what they did, so they might come in print; worthless whippets, and jackstraws, who meeter it in his commendation, whom he would compare with the highest." The works of these young writers he describes by an image exquisitely ludicrous and satirical:—

"These mushrumpes, who pester the world with their pamphlets, are like those barbarous people in the hot countries, who, when they have bread to make, doe no more than clap the dowe upon a post on the outside of their houses, and there leave it to the sun to bake; so their indigested conceipts, far rawer than anie dowe, at all adventures upon the post they clap, pluck them off who will, and think they have made as good a batch of poetrie as may be."

Of Harvey's list of friends he observes:—.

"To a bead-roll of learned men and lords, he appeals, whether he be an asse or no?"

Harvey had said, "Thomas Nash, from the top of his wit looking down upon simple creatures, calleth Gabriel Harvey a dunce, a foole, an ideot, a dolt, a goose-cap, an asse, and so forth; for some of the residue is not to be spoken but with his owne mannerly mouth; but he should have shewed particularlie which wordes in my letters were the wordes of a dunce; which sentences the sentences of a foole; which

arguments the arguments of an ideot; which opinions the opinions of a dolt; which judgments the judgments of a goose-cap; which conclusions the conclusions of an asse." *

Thus Harvey reasons till he becomes unreasonable; one would have imagined that the literary satires of our English Lucian had been voluminous enough, without the mathematical demonstration. The banterers seem to have put poor Harvey nearly out of his wits; he and his friends felt their blows too profoundly; they were much too thin-skinned, and the solemn air of Harvey in his graver moments at their menaces is extremely ludicrous. They frequently called him *Gabrielissime Gabriel*, which quintessence of himself seems to have mightily affected him. They threatened to confute his letters till eternity—which seems to have put him in despair. The following passage, descriptive of Gabriel's distresses, may excite a smile.

"This grand confuter of my letters says, 'Gabriel, if there be any wit or industrie in thee, now I will dare it to the vttermost; write of what thou wilt, in what language thou wilt, and I will confute it, and answere it. Take Truth's part, and I will prooove truth to be no truth, marching ovt of thy dung-voiding mouth.' He will never leave me as long as he is able to lift a pen, *ad infinitum;* if I reply, he has a rejoinder; and for my brief *triplication*, he is prouided with a *quadruplication*, and so he mangles my sentences, hacks my arguments, wrenches my words, chops and changes my phrases, even to the disjoyning and dislocation of my whole meaning."

Poor Harvey! he knew not that there was *nothing real* in ridicule, *no end* to its merry malice!

Harvey's taste for hexameter verses, which he so unnaturally forced into our language, is admirably ridiculed. Harvey had shown his taste for these metres by a variety of poems, to whose subjects Nash thus sarcastically alludes:—

"It had grown with him into such a dictionary custom, that no may-pole in the street, no wethercocke on anie church-steeple, no arbour, no lawrell, no yewe-tree, he would ouer-skip, without hayling in this manner. After supper, if he

* "Pierce's Supererogation, or a new praise of the Old Asse," 1593.

chanest to play at cards with a queen of harts in his hands, he would run upon men's and women's hearts all the night."

And he happily introduces here one of the miserable hexameter conceits of Harvey—

> "Stout hart and sweet hart, yet stoutest hart to be stooped."

Harvey's "Encomium Lauri" thus ridiculously commences:—

> "What might I call this tree? A lawrell? O bonny lawrell,
> Needes to thy bowes will I bow this knee, and vayle my bonetto;"

which Nash most happily burlesques by describing Harvey under a yew-tree at Trinity-hall, composing verses on the weathercock of Allhallows in Cambridge:—

> "O thou wether-coke that stands on the top of Allhallows,
> Come thy waies down, if thou darst, for thy crowne, and take the wall on us."

"The hexameter verse (says Nash) I graunt to be a gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English beggar,) yet this clyme of our's hee cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; he goes twitching and hopping in our language, like a man running vpon quagmires, vp the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins."

The most humorous part in this Scribleriad, is a ludicrous narrative of Harvey's expedition to the metropolis, for the sole purpose of writing his "Pierce's Supererogation," pitted against Nash's "Pierce Pennilesse." The facetious Nash describes the torpor and pertinacity of his genius, by telling us he had kept Harvey at work—

"For seaven and thirtie weekes space while he lay at his printer's, Wolfe, never stirring out of doors, or being churched all that while—and that in the deadest season that might bee, hee lying in the ragingest furie of the last plague where there dyde above 1600 a weeke in London, ink-squitting and saracenically printing against mee. Three quarters of a year thus immured, hee remained, with his spirits yearning empassionment, and agonised fury, thirst of revenge, neglect-

ing soul and bodies health to compasse it—sweating and dealing upon it most intentively."

The narrative proceeds with the many perils which Harvey's printer encountered, by expense of diet, and printing for this bright genius and his friends, whose works "would rust and iron-spot paper to have their names breathed over it;" and that Wolfe designed "to get a privilege betimes, forbidding of all others to sell waste-paper but himself." The climax of the narrative, after many misfortunes, ends with Harvey being arrested by the printer, and confined to Newgate, where "his sword is taken from him to his perpetual disgrace." So much did Gabriel endure for having written a book against Tom Nash!

But Harvey might deny some of these ludicrous facts.—Will he deny? cries Nash—and here he has woven every tale the most watchful malice could collect, varnished for their full effect. Then he adds,

"You see I have brought the doctor out of request at court; and it shall cost me a fall, but I will get him howted out of the Vniuersitie too, ere I giue him ouer." He tells us Harvey was brought on the stage at Trinity-college, in "the exquisite comedie of Pedantius," where, under "the finical fine schoolmaster, the just manner of his phrase, they stufft his mouth with, and the whole buffianisme throughout his bookes, they bolstered out his part with—euen to the carrying of his gowne, his nice gate in his pantofles, or the affected accent of his speech.—Let him deny that there was a shewe made at Clarehall of him and his brothers, called

Tarrantantara turba tumultuosa Trigonum
Tri-Harueyorum Tri-harmonia;

and another shewe of the little minnow his brother, at Peterhouse, called

Duns furens, Dick Harney in a frensie.

Whereupon Dick came and broke the college glass windows, and Dr. Perne caused him to be set in the stockes till the shewe was ended."

This "Duns furens, Dick Harvey in a frensie," was not only the brother of one who ranked high in society and literature, but himself a learned professor. Nash brings him

down to "Pigmey Dick, that lookes like a pound of goldsmiths' candles, who had like to commit folly last year with a milk-maid, as a friend of his very soberly informed me. Little and little-wittied Dick, that hath vowed to live and die in defence of Brutus and his Trojans." * A Herculean feat of this "Duns furens," Nash tells us, was his setting Aristotle with his heels upwards on the schoolgates at Cambridge, and putting ass's ears on his head, which Tom here records in *perpetuam rei memoriam*. But Wood, our grave and keen literary antiquary, observes—

"To let pass other matters these vain men (the wits) report of Richard Harvey, his works show him quite another person than what they make him to be."

Nash then forms a ludicrous contrast between "witless Gabriel and ruffling Richard." The astronomer Richard was continually baiting the great bear in the firmament, and in his lectures set up atheistical questions, which Nash maliciously adds, "as I am afraid the earth would swallow me if I should but rehearse." And at his close, Nash bitterly regrets he has no more room; "else I should make Gabriel a fugitive out of England, being the rauenousest slouen that ever lapt porredge in noblemen's houses, where he has had already, out of two, his mittimus of Ye may be gone! for he was a sower of seditious paradoxes amongst kitchin-boys." Nash seems to have considered himself as terrible as an Archilochus, whose satires were so fatal as to induce the satirized, after having read them, to hang themselves.

How ill poor Harvey passed through these wit-duels, and how profoundly the wounds inflicted on him and his brothers were felt, appears by his own confessions. In his "Foure Letters," after some curious observations on invectives and satires, from those of Archilochus, Lucian, and Aretine, to Skelton and Scoggin, and "the whole venemous and viperous brood of old and new raylers," he proceeds to blame even his beloved friend the gentle Spenser, for the severity of his

* He had written an antiquarian work on the descent of Brutus on our island.—The party also, who at the University attacked the opinions of Aristotle, were nick-named the *Trojans* as determined enemies of the *Greeks*.

"Mother Hubbard's tale," a satire on the court. "I must needs say, Mother Hubbard in heat of choller, forgetting the pure sanguine of her Sweete Feary Queene, artfully ouershott her malcontent-selfe; as elsewhere I have specified at large, with the good leaue of vnspotted friendship. Sallust and Clodius learned of Tully to frame artificial declamations and patheticall invectives against Tully himselfe; if Mother Hubbard, in the vaine of Chawcer, happen to tel one canicular tale, father Elderton and his son Greene, in the vaine of Skelton or Scoggin, will counterfeit a hundred dogged fables, libels, slaunders, lies, for the whetstone. But many will sooner lose their liues than the least jott of their reputation. What mortal feudes, what cruel bloodshed, what terrible slaughterdome have been committed for the point of honour and some few courtly ceremonies."

The incidents so plentifully narrated in this Lucianic biography, the very nature of this species of satire throws into doubt; yet they still seem shadowed out from some truths; but the truths who can unravel from the fictions? And thus a narrative is consigned to posterity which involves illustrious characters in an inextricable net-work of calumny and genius.

Writers of this class alienate themselves from human kind, they break the golden bond which holds them to society; and they live among us like a polished banditti. In these copious extracts, I have not noticed the more criminal insinuations against the Harveys; I have left the grosser slanders untouched. My object has been only to trace the effects of ridicule, and to detect its artifices, by which the most dignified characters may be deeply injured at the pleasure of a Ridiculer. The wild mirth of ridicule, aggravating and taunting real imperfections, and fastening imaginary ones on the victim in idle sport or ill-humour, strikes at the most brittle thing in the world, a man's good reputation, for delicate matters which are not under the protection of the law, but in which so much of personal happiness is concerned.

LITERARY HATRED.

EXHIBITING A CONSPIRACY AGAINST AN AUTHOR.

In the peaceful walks of literature we are startled at discovering genius with the mind, and, if we conceive the instrument it guides to be a stiletto, with the hand of an assassin—irascible, vindictive, armed with indiscriminate satire, never pardoning the merit of rival genius, but fastening on it throughout life, till, in the moral retribution of human nature, these very passions, by their ungratified cravings, have tended to annihilate the being who fostered them. These passions among literary men are with none more inextinguishable than among *provincial writers*.—Their bad feelings are concentrated by their local contraction. The proximity of men of genius seems to produce a familiarity which excites hatred or contempt; while he who is afflicted with disordered passions imagines that he is urging his own claims to genius by denying them to their possessor. A whole life passed in harassing the industry or the genius which he has not equalled; and instead of running the open career as a competitor, only skulking as an assassin by their side, is presented in the object now before us.

Dr. Gilbert Stuart seems early in life to have devoted himself to literature; but his habits were irregular, and his passions fierce. The celebrity of Robertson, Blair, and Henry, with other Scottish brothers, diseased his mind with a most envious rancour. He confined all his literary efforts to the pitiable motive of destroying theirs; he was prompted to every one of his historical works by the mere desire of discrediting some work of Robertson; and his numerous critical labours were all directed to annihilate the genius of his country. How he converted his life into its own scourge, how wasted talents he might have cultivated into perfection, lost every trace of humanity, and finally perished, devoured by his own fiendlike passions,—shall be illustrated by the following narrative, collected from a correspondence now lying before me, which the author carried on with his publisher in

London. I shall copy out at some length the hopes and disappointments of the literary adventurer—the colours are not mine; I am dipping my pencil in the pallet of the artist himself.

In June 1773 was projected in the Scottish capital "The Edinburgh Magazine and Review." Stuart's letters breathe the spirit of rapturous confidence. He had combined the sedulous attention of the intelligent Smellie, who was to be the printer, with some very honourable critics; Professor Baron, Dr. Blacklock, and Professor Richardson; and the first numbers were executed with more talent than periodical publications had then exhibited. But the hardiness of Stuart's opinions, his personal attacks, and the acrimony of his literary libels, presented a new feature in Scottish literature, of such ugliness and horror, that every honourable man soon averted his face from this *boutefeu*.

He designed to ornament his first number with—

"A print of my Lord Monboddo in his quadruped form. I must, therefore most earnestly beg that you will purchase for me a copy of it in some of the Macaroni-print shops. It is not to be procured at Edinburgh. They are afraid to vend it here. We are to take it on the footing of a figure of an animal not yet described; and are to give a grave, yet satirical account of it, in the manner of Buffon. It would not be proper to allude to his lordship but in a very distant manner."

It was not, however, ventured on; and the nondescript animal was still confined to the windows of "the Macaroni-print shops." It was, however, the bloom of the author's fancy, and promised all the mellow fruits it afterwards produced.

In September, this ardour did not abate :—

"The proposals are issued; the subscriptions in the booksellers' shops astonish; correspondents flock in; and, what will surprise you, the timid proprietors of the Scots' Magazine have come to the resolution of dropping their work. You stare at all this, and so do I too."

Thus he flatters himself that he is to annihilate his rival, without even striking the first blow. The appearance of his first number is to be the moment when their last is to come

forth. Authors, like the discoverers of mines, are the most sanguine creatures in the world: Gilbert Stuart afterwards flattered himself Dr. Henry was lying at the point of death from the scalping of his tomahawk pen; but of this anon.

On the publication of the first number, in November 1773, all is exultation; and an account is facetiously expected that "a thousand copies had emigrated from the Row and Fleet-street."

There is a serious composure in the letter of December, which seems to be occasioned by the tempered answer of his London correspondent. The work was more suited to the meridian of Edinburgh; and from causes sufficiently obvious, its personality and causticity. Stuart, however, assures his friend, that "the second number you will find better than the first, and the third better than the second."

The next letter is dated March 4, 1774, in which I find our author still in good spirits:—

"The magazine rises, and promises much, in this quarter. Our artillery has silenced all opposition. The rogues of the 'uplifted hands' decline the combat." These rogues are the clergy, and some others, who had "uplifted hands" from the vituperative nature of their adversary; for he tells us, that "now the clergy are silent, the town-council have had the presumption to oppose us; and have threatened Creech (the publisher in Edinburgh) with the terror of making him a constable for his insolence. A pamphlet on the abuses of Heriot's Hospital, including a direct proof of perjury in the provost, was the punishment inflicted in return. And new papers are forging to chastise them, in regard to the poor's rate, which is again started; the improper choice of professors; and violent stretches of the impost. The *liberty of the press*, in its fullest extent, is to be employed against them."

Such is the language of reform, and the spirit of a reformist! A little private malignity thus ferments a good deal of public spirit; but patriotism must be independent to be pure. If the Edinburgh Review continues to succeed in its sale, as Stuart fancies, Edinburgh itself may be in some danger. His perfect contempt of his contemporaries is amusing:—

"Monboddo's second volume is published, and, with Kaimes,

will appear in our next; the former is a childish performance; the latter rather better. We are to treat them with a good deal of freedom. I observe an amazing falling off in the English Reviews. We beat them hollow. I fancy they have no assistance but from the Dissenters, a dull body of men. The Monthly will not easily recover the death of Hawkesworth; and I suspect that Langhorne has forsaken them; for I see no longer his pen."

We are now hastening to the sudden and the moral catastrophe of our tale. The thousand copies which had emigrated to London remained there, little disturbed by public inquiry; and in Scotland, the personal animosity against almost every literary character there, which had inflamed the sale, became naturally the latent cause of its extinction; for its life was but a feverish existence, and its florid complexion carried with it the seeds of its dissolution. Stuart, at length, quarrelled with his coadjutor, Smellie, for altering his reviews. Smellie's prudential dexterity was such, that, in an article designed to level Lord Kaimes with Lord Monboddo, the whole libel was completely metamorphosed into a panegyric. They were involved in a law-suit about "a blasphemous paper." And now the enraged Zoilus complains of "his hours of peevishness and dissatisfaction." He acknowledges, that "a circumstance had happened which had broke his peace and ease altogether for some weeks." And now he resolves that this great work shall quietly sink into a mere compilation from the London periodical works. Such, then, is the progress of malignant genius! The author, like him who invented the brazen bull of Phalaris, is writhing in that machine of tortures he had contrived for others.

We now come to a very remarkable passage: it is the frenzied language of disappointed wickedness.

"17 *June*, 1774.

"It is an infinite disappointment to me that the Magazine does not grow in London; I thought that the soil had been richer. But it is my constant fate to be disappointed in everything I attempt; I do not think I ever had a wish that was gratified; and never dreaded an event that did not come. With this felicity of fate, I wonder how the devil I could turn

projector. I am now sorry that I left London; and the moment that I have money enough to carry me back to it, I shall set off. *I mortally detest and abhor this place, and everybody in it.* Never was there a city where there was so much pretension to knowledge, and that had so little of it. The solemn foppery, and the gross stupidity of the Scottish literati, are perfectly insupportable. I shall drop my idea of a Scots newspaper. Nothing will do in this country that has common sense in it; only cant, hypocrisy, and superstition, will flourish here. *A curse on the country, and all the men, women, and children in it!*"

Again.—"The publication is too good for the country. There are very few men of taste or erudition on this side the Tweed. Yet every idiot one meets with lays claim to both. Yet the success of the Magazine is in reality greater than we could expect, considering that we have every clergyman in the kingdom to oppose it, and that the magistracy of the place are every moment threatening its destruction."

And, therefore, this recreant Scot anathematizes the Scottish people! for not applauding blasphemy, calumny, and every species of literary criminality. Such are the monstrous passions that swell out the poisonous breast of genius, deprived of every moral restraint; and such was the demoniac irritability which prompted a wish in Collot d'Herbois to set fire to the four quarters of the city of Lyons; while, in his "tender mercies," the kennels of the streets were running with the blood of its inhabitants—remembering still that the Lyonese had, when he was a miserable actor, hissed him off the stage.

Stuart curses his country, and retreats to London. Fallen, but not abject; repulsed, but not altered; degraded, but still haughty. No change of place could operate any in his heart. He was born in literary crime, and he perished in it. It was now "The English Review" was instituted, with his idol Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, and others. He says, "To Whitaker he assigns the palm of history in preference to Hume and Robertson." I have heard that he considered himself higher than Whitaker, and ranked himself with Montesquieu. He negotiated for Whitaker and him-

self a doctor of laws' degree; and they were now in the titular possession of all the fame which a dozen pieces could bestow! In "The English Review" broke forth all the genius of Stuart in an unnatural warfare of Scotchmen in London against Scotchmen in Edinburgh. "The bitter herbs," which seasoned it against Blair, Robertson, Gibbon, and the ablest authors of the age, at first provoked the public appetite, which afterwards indignantly rejected the palatable garbage.

But to proceed with our *Literary Conspiracy*, which was conducted by Stuart, with a pertinacity of invention, perhaps not to be paralleled in literary history. That the peace of mind of such an industrious author as Dr. Henry was for a considerable time destroyed—that the sale of a work on which Henry had expended much of his fortune and his life was stopped; and that, when covered with obloquy and ridicule, in despair he left Edinburgh for London, still encountering the same hostility; that all this was the work of the same hand—perhaps was never even known to its victim. The multiplied forms of this Proteus of the Malevoli were still but one devil; fire or water, or a bull or a lion; still it was the same Proteus, the same Stuart.

From the correspondence before me, I am enabled to collect the commencement and the end of this literary conspiracy, with all its intermediate links. It thus commences:

"25 *Nov.*, 1773.

"We have been attacked from different quarters, and Dr. Henry in particular has given a long and a dull defence of his sermon. I have replied to it, with a degree of spirit altogether unknown in this country. The reverend historian was perfectly astonished; and has actually invited the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge to arm in his cause! I am about to be persecuted by the whole clergy, and I am about to persecute them in my turn. They are hot and zealous; I am cool and dispassionate, like a determined sceptic; since I have entered the lists, I must fight; I must gain the victory, or perish like a man."

"13 *Dec.* 1773.

"David Hume wants to review Henry; but that task is

so precious that I will undertake it myself. Moses, were he to ask it as a favour, should not have it; yea, not even the man after God's own heart."

"4 *March*, 1774.

"This month Henry is utterly demolished; his sale is stopped, many of his copies are returned; and his old friends have forsaken him; pray in what state is he in London? Henry has delayed his London journey; you cannot easily conceive how exceedingly he is humbled.*

"I wish I could transport myself to London to review him for the Monthly. A fire there, and in the Critical, would perfectly annihilate him. Could you do nothing in the latter? To the former I suppose David Hume has transcribed the criticism he intended for us. It is precious, and would divert you. I keep a proof of it in my cabinet for the amusement of friends. This great philosopher begins to dote."†

Stuart prepares to assail Henry, on his arrival in London, from various quarters—to lower the value of his history in the estimation of the purchasers.

"21 *March*, 1774.

"To-morrow morning Henry sets off for London, with immense hopes of selling his history. I wish he had delayed

* It may be curious to present Stuart's idea of the literary talents of Henry. Henry's unhappy turn for humour, and a style little accordant with historical dignity, lie fairly open to the critic's animadversion. But the research and application of the writer, for that day, were considerable, and are still appreciated. But we are told that "he neither furnishes entertainment nor instruction. Diffuse, vulgar, and ungrammatical, he strips history of all her ornaments. As an antiquary, he wants accuracy and knowledge; and, as an historian, he is destitute of fire, taste, and sentiment. His work is a gazette, in which we find actions and events, without their causes; and in which we meet with the names, without the characters of personages.—He has amassed all the refuse and lumber of the times he would record." Stuart never imagined that the time would arrive, when the name of Henry would be familiar to English readers, and by many that of Stuart would not be recollected.

† The critique on Henry, in the Monthly Review, was written by Hume—and, because the philosopher was candid, he is here said to have doted.

till our last review of him had reached your city. But I really suppose that he has little probability of getting any gratuity. The trade are too sharp to give precious gold for perfect nonsense. I wish sincerely that I could enter Holborn the same hour with him. He should have a repeated fire to combat with. I entreat that you may be so kind as to let him feel some of your thunder. I shall never forget the favour. If Whitaker is in London, he could give a blow. Paterson will give him a knock. Strike by all means. The wretch will tremble, grow pale, and return with a consciousness of his debility. I entreat I may hear from you a day or two after you have seen him. He will complain grievously of me to Strahan and Rose. I shall send you a paper about him; an advertisement from Parnassus, in the manner of Boccalini."

"*March*, 1774.

"Dr. Henry has by this time reached you. I think you ought to pay your respects to him in the Morning Chronicle. If you would only transcribe his jests, it would make him perfectly ridiculous. See for example, what he says of St. Dunstan. A word to the wise."

"*March* 27, 1774.

"I have a thousand thanks to give you for your insertion of the paper in the London Chronicle; and for the part you propose to act in regard to Henry. I could wish that you knew for certain his being in London before you strike the first blow. An inquiry at Cadell's will give this. When you have an enemy to attack, I shall in return give my best assistance, and aim at him a mortal blow, and rush forward to his overthrow, though the flames of hell should start up to oppose me.

"It pleases me, beyond what I can express, that Whitaker has an equal contempt for Henry. The idiot threatened, when he left Edinburgh, that he would find a method to manage the Reviews, and that he would oppose their panegyric to our censure. Hume has behaved ill in the affair, and I am preparing to chastise him. You may expect a series of papers in the magazine, pointing out a multitude of his errors, and

ascertaing his ignorance of English history. It was too much for my temper to be assailed both by infidels and believers. My pride could not submit to it. I shall act in my defence with a spirit which it seems they have not expected."

"11 *April*, 1774.

"I received, with infinite pleasure, the annunciation of the great man into the capital. It is forcible and excellent; and you have my best thanks for it. You improve amazingly. The poor creature will be stupified with amazement. Inclosed is a paper for him. Boccalini will follow. I shall fall upon a method to let David know Henry's transactions about his review. It is mean to the last degree. But what could one expect from the most ignorant and the most contemptible man alive? Do you ever see Macfarlane? He owes me a favour for his history of George III., and would give a fire for the packet. The idiot is to be moderator for the ensuing assembly. It shall not, however, be without opposition.

"Would the paragraph about him from the inclosed leaf of the Edinburgh Review be any disgrace to the Morning Chronicle?"

"20*th May*, 1774.

"Boccalini I thought of transmitting, when the reverend historian, for whose use it was intended, made his appearance at Edinburgh. But it will not be lost. He shall most certainly see it. David's critique was most acceptable. It is a curious specimen in one view of insolent vanity, and in another of contemptible meanness. The old historian begins to dote, and the new one was never out of dotage."

"3 *April*, 1775.

"I see every day that what is written to a man's disparagement is never forgot nor forgiven. Poor Henry is on the point of death, and his friends declare that I have killed him. I received the information as a compliment, and begged they would not do me so much honour."

But Henry and his history long survived Stuart and his

critiques; and Robertson, Blair, and Kaimes, with others he assailed, have all taken their due ranks in public esteem. What niche does Stuart occupy? His historical works possess the show, without the solidity, of research; hardy paradoxes, and an artificial style of momentary brilliancy, are none of the lasting materials of history. This shadow of "Montesquieu," for he conceived him only to be his fit rival, derived the last consolations of life from an obscure corner of a Burton ale-house—there, in rival potations, with two or three other disappointed authors, they regaled themselves on ale they could not always pay for, and recorded their own literary celebrity, which had never taken place. Some time before his death, his asperity was almost softened by melancholy; with a broken spirit, he reviewed himself; a victim to that unrighteous ambition which sought to build up its greatness with the ruins of his fellow-countrymen; prematurely wasting talents which might have been directed to literary eminence. And Gilbert Stuart died as he had lived, a victim to intemperance, physical and moral!

UNDUE SEVERITY OF CRITICISM.

DR. KENRICK.—SCOTT OF AMWELL.

We have witnessed the malignant influence of illiberal criticism, not only on literary men, but over literature itself, since it is the actual cause of suppressing works which lie neglected, though completed by their authors. The arts of literary condemnation, as they may be practised by men of wit and arrogance, are well known; and it is much less difficult than it is criminal, to scare the modest man of learning, and to rack the man of genius, in that bright vision of authorship sometimes indulged in the calm of their studies;—a generous emotion to inspire a generous purpose! With suppressed indignation, shrinking from the press, such have condemned themselves to a Carthusian silence; but the public will gain as little by silent authors as by a community of lazy

monks; or a choir of singers who insist they have lost their voice. That undue severity of criticism which diminishes the number of good authors, is a greater calamity than even that mawkish panegyric, which may invite indifferent ones; for the truth is, a bad book produces no great evil in literature; it dies soon, and naturally; and the feeble birth only disappoints its unlucky parent, with a score of idlers, who are the dupes of their rage after novelty. A bad book never sells unless it be addressed to the passions, and, in that case, the severest criticism will never impede its circulation; malignity and curiosity being passions so much stronger and less delicate than taste or truth.

And who are the authors marked out for attack? Scarcely one of the populace of scribblers; for wit will not lose one silver shaft on game which, struck, no one would take up. It must level at the Historian, whose novel researches throw a light in the depths of antiquity; at the Poet, who, addressing himself to the imagination, perishes if that sole avenue to the heart be closed on him. Such are those who receive the criticism which has sent some nervous authors to their graves, and embittered the life of many whose talents we all regard.*

But this species of criticism, though ungenial and nipping at first, does not always kill the tree which it has frozen over.

In the calamity before us, Time, that great autocrat, who in its tremendous march destroys authors, also annihilates critics; and acting in this instance with a new kind of benevolence, takes up some who have been violently thrown

* So sensible was even the calm Newton to critical attacks, that Whiston tells us he lost his favour, which he had enjoyed for twenty years, for contradicting Newton in his old age; for no man was of "a more fearful temper." Whiston declares that he would not have thought proper to have published his work against Newton's Chronology in his life-time, "because I knew his temper so well, that I should have expected it would have killed him; as Dr. Bentley, Bishop Stillingfleet's chaplain, told me, that he believed Mr. Locke's thorough confutation of the Bishop's metaphysics about the Trinity hastened his end." Pope writhed in his chair from the light shafts which Cibber darted on him; yet they were not tipped with the poison of the Java-tree. Dr. Hawkesworth *died of criticism*—Singing-birds cannot live in a storm.

down and fixes them in their proper place; and daily enfeebling unjust criticism, has restored an injured author to his full honours.

It is, however, lamentable enough that authors must participate in that courage which faces the cannon's mouth, or cease to be authors; for military enterprise is not the taste of modest, retired, and timorous characters. The late Mr. Cumberland used to say, that authors must not be thin-skinned, but shelled like the rhinoceros; there are, more delicately tempered animals among them, new-born lambs, who shudder at a touch, and die under a pressure.

As for those great authors (though the greatest shrink from ridicule) who still retain public favour, they must be patient, proud, and fearless—patient of that obloquy which still will stain their honour from literary echoers; proud, while they are sensible that their literary offspring is not

> "Deformed, unfinished, sent before its time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up."

And fearless of all critics, when they recollect the reply of Bentley to one who threatened to write him down, "that no author was ever written down but by himself."

An author must consider himself as an arrow shot into the world; his impulse must be stronger than the current of air that carries him on—else he fall!

The character I had proposed to illustrate this calamity was the caustic Dr. Kenrick, who, once during several years, was, in his "London Review," one of the great disturbers of literary repose. The turn of his criticism; the airiness or the asperity of his sarcasm; the arrogance with which he treated some of our great authors, would prove very amusing, and serve to display a certain talent of criticism. The life of Kenrick too would have afforded some wholesome instruction concerning the morality of a critic. But the rich materials are not at hand! He was a man of talents, who ran a race with the press; could criticise all the genius of the age faster than it was produced; could make his own malignity look like wit, and turn the wit of others into absurdity, by placing it topsy-turvy. As thus, when he attacked "The Traveller"

of Goldsmith, which he called "a flimsy poem," he discussed the subject as a grave, political pamphlet, condemning the whole system, as raised on false principles. "The Deserted Village" was sneeringly pronounced to be "pretty;" but then it had "neither fancy, dignity, genius, or fire." When he reviewed Johnson's "Tour to the Hebrides," he decrees that the whole book was written "by one who had seen but little," and, therefore, could not be very interesting. His virulent attack on Johnson's Shakespeare may be preserved for its total want of literary decency; and his "Love in the Suds, a town eclogue," where he has placed Garrick with an infamous character, may be useful to show how far witty malignity will advance in the violation of moral decency. He libelled all the genius of the age, and was proud of doing it.* Johnson and Akenside preserved a stern silence: but poor Goldsmith, the child of Nature, could not resist attempting to execute martial law, by caning the critic; for which being blamed, he published a defence of himself in the papers. I shall transcribe his feelings on Kenrick's excessive and illiberal criticism.

"The law gives us no protection against this injury. The insults we receive before the public, by being more open, are the more distressing; by treating them with silent contempt, we do not pay a sufficient deference to the opinion of the world. By recurring to legal redress, we too often expose the weakness of the law, which only serves to increase our mortification by failing to relieve us. In short, every man should singly consider himself as a guardian of the liberty of the press, and as far as his influence can extend, should endeavour to prevent its licentiousness becoming at last the grave of its freedom."

Here then is another calamity arising from the calamity of undue severity of criticism, which authors bring on themselves

* In one of his own publications he quotes with great self-complacency, the following lines on himself:

"The wits who drink water and suck sugar-candy,
Impute the strong spirit of Kenrick to brandy:
They are not so much out; the matter in short is,
He sips *aqua-vitæ* and spits *aqua-fortis*."

by their excessive anxiety, which throws them into some extremely ridiculous attitudes; and surprisingly influence even authors of good sense and temper. Scott of Amwell, the Quaker and Poet, was, doubtless, a modest and amiable man, for Johnson declared "he loved him." When his poems were collected, they were reviewed in the Critical Review; very offensively to the Poet; for the critic, alluding to the numerous embellishments of the volume, observed, that

"That there is a profusion of ornaments and finery about this book, not quite suitable to the plainness and simplicity of the Barclean system; but Mr. Scott is fond of the Muses, and wishes, we suppose, like Captain Macheath, to see his ladies well dressed."

Such was the cold affected witticism of the critic, whom I intimately knew—and I believe he meant little harm! His friends imagined even that this was the solitary attempt at wit he had ever made in his life; for after a lapse of years, he would still recur to it as an evidence of the felicity of his fancy, and the keenness of his satire. The truth is, he was a physician, whose name is prefixed as the editor to a great medical compilation, and who never pretended that he had any taste for poetry. His great art of poetical criticism was always, as Pope expresses a character, "to dwell in decencies;" his acumen, to detect that terrible poetic crime false rhymes, and to employ indefinite terms, which, as they had no precise meaning, were applicable to all things; to commend, occasionally, a passage not always the most exquisite; sometimes to hesitate, while, with delightful candour, he seemed to give up his opinion; to hazard sometimes a positive condemnation on parts which often unluckily proved the most favourite with the poet and the reader. Such was this poetical reviewer, whom no one disturbed in his periodical course, till the circumstance of a plain quaker becoming a poet, and fluttering in the finical ornaments of his book, provoked him from that calm state of innocent mediocrity, into miserable humour, and illiberal criticism.

The effect, however, this pert criticism had on poor Scott was indeed a calamity. It produced an inconsiderate "Letter to the Critical Reviewers." Scott was justly offended at

the stigma of quakerism, applied to the author of a literary composition; but too gravely accuses the critic of his scurrilous allusion to Macheath, as comparing him to a highwayman; he seems, however, more provoked at the old account of his poems; he says, "You rank all my poems together as *bad*, then discriminate some as *good*, and, to complete all, recommend the volume as *an agreeable and amusing collection*." Had the poet been personally acquainted with this tantalizing critic, he would have comprehended the nature of the criticism—and certainly would never have replied to it.

The critic, employing one of his indefinite terms, had said of "Amwell," and some of the early "Elegies," that "they had their share of poetical merit;" he does not venture to assign the proportion of that share, but, "the Amœbean and oriental eclogues, odes, epistles, &c. now added, are *of a much weaker feature, and many of them incorrect*."

Here Scott loses all his dignity as a quaker and a poet—he asks what the critic means by the affected phrase *much weaker feature;* the style, he says, was designed to be somewhat less elevated; and thus addresses the critic:—

"You may, however, be safely defied to pronounce them, with truth, deficient either in strength, or melody of versification! They were designed to be, like Virgil's, descriptive of Nature, simple and correct. Had you been disposed to do me justice, you might have observed that in these eclogues I had drawn from the great prototype Nature, much imagery that had escaped the notice of all my predecessors. You might also have remarked, that when I introduced images that had been already introduced by others, still the arrangement or combination of those images was my own The praise of originality you might at least have allowed me."

As for their *incorrectness!*—Scott points that accusation with a note of admiration, adding, "with whatever defects my works may be chargeable, the last is that of *incorrectness*."

We are here involuntarily reminded of Sir Fretful, in "The Critic:"—

"I think the interest rather declines in the fourth act."

"Rises! you mean, my dear friend!"

Perhaps the most extraordinary examples of the irritation

of a poet's mind, and a man of amiable temper, are those parts of this letter in which the author quotes large portions of his poetry, to refute the degrading strictures of the reviewer.

This was a fertile principle, admitting of very copious extracts; but the ludicrous attitude is that of an Adonis inspecting himself at his mirror.

That provoking see-saw of criticism, which our learned physician usually adopted in his critiques, was particularly tantalizing to the poet of Amwell. The critic condemns, in the gross, a whole set of eclogues; but immediately asserts of one of them, that "the whole of it has great poetical merit, and paints its subject in the warmest colours." When he came to review the odes, he discovers that "he does not meet with those polished numbers, nor that freedom and spirit, which that species of poetry requires;" and quotes half a stanza, which he declares is "abrupt and insipid." "From twenty-seven odes!" exclaims the writhing poet—"are the whole of my lyric productions to be stigmatised for four lines which are flatter than those that preceded them?" But what the critic could not be aware of, the poet tells us—he designed them to be just what they are. "I knew they were so, when they were first written; but they were thought sufficiently elevated for the place." And then he enters into an inquiry what the critic can mean by "polished numbers, freedom, and spirit." The passage is curious:—

"By your first criticism, *polished numbers*, if you mean melodious versification, this perhaps the general ear will not deny me. If you mean classical, chaste diction, free from tautologous repetitions of the same thoughts in different expressions; free from bad rhymes, unnecessary epithets, and incongruous metaphors; I believe you may be safely challenged to produce many instances wherein I have failed.

"By *freedom*, your second criterion, if you mean daring transition, or arbitrary and desultory disposition of ideas, however this may be required in the greater ode, it is now, I believe, for the first time, expected in the lesser ode. If you mean that careless, diffuse composition, that conversation-verse, or verse loitering into prose, now so fashionable, this is an excellence which I am not very ambitious of attaining.

But if you mean strong, concise, yet natural easy expression, I apprehend the general judgment will decide in my favour. To the general ear, and the general judgment, then do I appeal, as to an impartial tribunal." Here several odes are transcribed. "By *spirit*, your third criticism, I know nothing you can mean but enthusiasm; that which transports us to every scene, and interests us in every sentiment. Poetry without this cannot subsist; every species demands its proportion, from the greater ode, of which it is the principal characteristic, to the lesser, in which a small portion of it only has hitherto been thought requisite. My productions, I apprehend, have never before been deemed destitute of this essential constituent. Whatever I have wrote, I have felt, and I believe others have felt it also."

On "the epistles," which had been condemned in the gross, suddenly the critic turns round courteously to the bard, declaring "they are written in an easy and familiar style, and seem to flow from a good and a benevolent heart." But then sneeringly adds, that one of them being entitled "An Essay on Painting, addressed to a young Artist, had better have been omitted, because it had been so fully treated in so masterly a manner by Mr. Hayley." This was letting fall a spark in a barrel of gunpowder. Scott immediately analyses his brother poet's poem, to show they have nothing in common; and then compares those similar passages the subject naturally produced, to show that "his poem does not suffer greatly in the comparison." "You may," he adds, after giving copious extracts from both poems, "persist in saying that Mr. Hayley's are the best. Your business then is to prove it." This, indeed, had been a very hazardous affair for our medical critic, whose poetical feelings were so equable, that he acknowledges "Mr. Scott's poem is just and elegant," but "Mr. Hayley's is likewise just and elegant;" therefore, if one man has written a piece "just and elegant," there is no need of another on the same subject "just and elegant."

To such an extreme point of egotism was a modest and respectable author most cruelly driven, by the callous playfulness of a poetical critic, who himself had no sympathy for poetry of any quality or any species, and whose sole art con-

sisted in turning about the canting dictionary of criticism. Had Homer been a modern candidate for poetical honours, from him Homer had not been distinguished, even from the mediocrity of Scott of Amwell, whose poetical merits are not, however, slight. In his Amœbean eclogues, he may be distinguished as the poet of botanists.

A VOLUMINOUS AUTHOR WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

Vast erudition, without the tact of good sense, in a voluminous author, what a calamity! for to such a mind no subject can present itself on which he is unprepared to write, and none at the same time on which he can ever write reasonably. The name and the works of William Prynne have often come under the eye of the reader; but it is even now difficult to discover his real character: for Prynne stood so completely insulated amid all parties, that he was ridiculed by his friends, and execrated by his enemies. The exuberance of his fertile pen, the strangeness and the manner of his subjects, and his pertinacity in voluminous publication, are known, and are nearly unparalleled in literary history.

Could the man himself be separated from the author, Prynne would not appear ridiculous; but the unlucky author of nearly two hundred works,* and who, as Wood quaintly computes,

* That all these works should not be wanting to posterity, Prynne deposited the complete collection in the library of Lincoln's Inn, about forty volumes in folio and quarto. Noy, the Attorney-General, Prynne's great adversary, was provoked at the society's acceptance of these ponderous volumes, and promised to send them the voluminous labours of Taylor the water-poet, to place by their side; he judged, as Wood says, that "Prynne's books were worth little or nothing; that his proofs were no arguments, and his affirmations no testimonies." But honest Anthony, in spite of his prejudices against Prynne, confesses, that though "by the generality of scholars they are looked upon to be rather rhapsodical and confused, than polite or concise; yet, for Antiquaries, Critics, and sometimes for Divines, they are useful." Such erudition as Prynne's always retains its value—the author who could quote a hundred authors on "the unloveliness of love-locks," will always make a good literary chest of drawers, well filled, for those who can make better use of their contents than himself.

"must have written a sheet every day of his life, reckoning from the time that he came to the use of reason and the state of man," has involved his life in his authorship; the greatness of his character loses itself in his voluminous works; and whatever Prynne may have been in his own age, and remains to posterity, he was fated to endure all the calamities of an author who has strained learning into absurdity, and abused zealous industry by chimerical speculation.

Yet his activity, and the firmness and intrepidity of his character in public life, were as ardent as they were in his study—his soul was Roman; and Eachard says, that Charles II., who could not but admire his earnest honesty, his copious learning, and the public persecutions he suffered, and the ten imprisonments he endured, inflicted by all parties, dignified him with the title of "the Cato of the Age;" and one of his own party facetiously described him as "William the Conqueror," a title he had most hardly earned by his inflexible and invincible nature. Twice he had been cropped of his ears; for at the first time the executioner having spared the two fragments, the inhuman judge on his second trial discovering them with astonishment, ordered them to be most unmercifully cropped—then he was burned on his cheek, and ruinously fined, and imprisoned in a remote solitude,*—but

* Prynne seems to have considered being debarred from pen, ink, and books, as an act more barbarous than the loss of his ears. See his curious book of "A New Discovery of the Prelate's Tyranny;" it is a complete collection of everything relating to Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton; three political fanatics, who seem impatiently to have courted the fate of Marsyas. Prynne in his voluminous argument, proving the illegality of the sentences he had suffered, in his ninth point, thus gives way to all the feelings of Martinus Scriblerus:—"Point 9th, that the prohibiting of me pen, ink, paper, and books, is against law." He employs an argument to prove that the abuse of any lawful thing never takes away the use of it; therefore the law does not deprive gluttons or drunkards of necessary meat and drink; this analogy he applies to his pen, ink, and books, of which they could not deprive him, though they might punish him for their abuse. He asserts that the popish prelates, in the reign of Mary, were the first who invented this new torture of depriving a scribbler of pen and ink. He quotes a long passage from Ovid's Tristia, to prove, that though exiled to the Isle of Pontus for his wanton books of love, pen and ink were not denied him to compose new

had they torn him limb by limb, Prynne had been in his mind a very polypus, which cut into pieces, still loses none of its individuality.

His conduct on the last of these occasions, when sentenced to be stigmatized, and to have his ears cut close, must be noticed. Turning to the executioner, he calmly invited him to do his duty—"Come, friend, come, burn me! cut me! I fear not! I have learned to fear the fire of hell, and not what man can do unto me; come, scar me! scar me!" In Prynne this was not ferocity, but heroism; Bastwick was intrepid out of spite, and Burton from fanaticism. The executioner had been urged not to spare his victims; and he performed his office with extraordinary severity, cruelly heating his iron twice, and cutting one of Prynne's ears so close, as to take away a piece of the cheek. Prynne stirred not in the torture; and when it was done, smiled, observing, "The more I am beaten down, the more I am lift up." After this punishment, in going to the Tower by water, he composed the following verses on the two letters branded on his cheek; S. L. for schismatical libeller, but which Prynne chose to translate "Stig-

poems; that St John, banished to the Isle of Patmos by the persecuting Domitian, still was allowed pen and ink, for there he wrote the Revelation—and he proceeds with similar facts. Prynne's books abound with uncommon facts on common topics, for he had no discernment; and he seems to have written to convince himself, and not the public.

But to show the extraordinary perseverance of Prynne in his love of scribbling, I transcribe the following title of one of his extraordinary works. He published "Comfortable cordials against discomfortable fears of Imprisonment, containing some Latin verses, sentences and texts of Scripture, *written by Mr. Wm Prynne on his chamber-walls in* the Tower of London, during his imprisonment there; translated by him into English verse, 1641. Prynne literally verifies Pope's description—

> "Is there who lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
> With desperate charcoal round his darken'd walls?"

We have also a catalogue of printed books written by Wm. Prynne of Lincoln's Inn, Esq., in these classes—

Before
During } his imprisonment, with the motto *Jucundi acti labores*, 1643.
Since

mata Laudis," the stigmas of his enemy, the Archbishop Laud.

> "Stigmata maxillis referens insignia Laudis,
> Exultans remeo, victima grata Deo."

The heroic man, who could endure agony and insult, and even thus commemorate his sufferings, with no unpoetical conception, almost degrades his own sublimity when the poetaster sets our teeth on edge by his verse.

> "Bearing Laud's stamps on my cheeks I retire
> Triumphing, God's sweet sacrifice by fire."

The triumph of this unconquered being was, indeed, signal. History scarcely exhibits so wonderful a reverse of fortune, and so strict a retribution, as occurred at this eventful period. He who had borne from the archbishop, and the lords in the Star Chamber, the most virulent invectives, wishing them at that instant seriously to consider that some who sat there on the bench might yet stand prisoners at the bar, and need the favour they now denied—at length saw the prediction completely verified.

What were the feelings of Laud, when Prynne, returning from his prison of Mount Orgueil, in triumph, the road strewed with boughs, amid the acclamations of the people—entered the apartment in the Tower which the venerable Laud now in his turn occupied. The unsparing Puritan sternly performed the office of rifling his papers,* and persecuted the

* The interesting particulars of this interview have been preserved by the Archbishop himself—and it is curious to observe how Laud could now utter the same tones of murmur and grief to which Prynne himself had recently given way. Studied insult in these cases accompanies power in the hands of a faction. I collect these particulars from "The History of the Troubles and Tryal of Archbishop Laud," and refer to Vicars's "God in the Mount, or a Parliamenterie Chronicle," p. 314, for the Puritanic triumphs.

"My implacable enemy, Mr. Pryn, was picked out as a man whose malice might be trusted to make the search upon me, and he did it exactly. The manner of the search upon me was thus: Mr. Pryn came into the Tower so soon as the gates were open—commanded the Warden to open my door—he came into my chamber, and found me in bed—Mr. Pryn, seeing me safe in bed, falls first to my pockets to rifle them—it

helpless prelate till he led him to the block. Prynne, to use his own words, for he could be eloquent when moved by passion, "had struck proud Canterbury to the heart; and had undermined all his prelatical designs to advance the bishops' pomp and power;"* Prynne triumphed—but, even this austere Puritan soon grieved over the calamities he had contributed to inflict on the nation; and, with a humane feeling,

was expressed in the warrant that he should search my pockets. Did they remember when they gave this warrant, how odious it was to parliaments, and some of themselves, to have the pockets of men searched? I rose, got my gown upon my shoulders, and he held me in the search till past nine in the morning, (he had come in betimes in the morning in the month of May.) He took from me twenty-one bundles of papers, which I had prepared for my defence, &c., a little book or diary, containing all the occurrences of my life, and my book of private devotions; both written with my own hand. Nor could I get him to leave this last; he must needs see what passed between God and me. The last place he rifled was a trunk which stood by my bed-side; in that he found nothing but about forty pounds in money, for my necessary expenses, which he meddled not with, and a bundle of some gloves. This bundle he was so careful to open, as to cause each glove to be looked into; upon this I tendered him one pair of the gloves, which he refusing, I told him he might take them, and fear no bribe, for he had already done me all the mischief he could, and I asked no favour of him; so he thanked me, took the gloves, and bound up my papers and went his way."—Prynne had a good deal of *cunning* in his character, as well as fortitude. He had all the subterfuges and quirks which, perhaps, form too strong a feature in the character of "an utter Barrister of Lincoln's Inn." His great artifice was secretly printing extracts from the diary of Laud, and placing a copy in the hands of every member of the House, which was a sudden stroke on the Archbishop, when at the bar, that at the moment overcame him. Once when Prynne was printing one of his libels, he attempted to deny being the author, and ran to the printing-house to distribute the forms, but it was proved he had corrected the proof and the revise. Another time, when he had written a libellous letter to the Archbishop, Noy, the attorney-general, sent for Prynne from his prison, and demanded of him whether the letter was of his own hand-writing. Prynne said he must see and read the letter before he could determine; and when Noy gave it to him, Prynne tore it to pieces, and threw the fragments out of the window, that it might not be brought in evidence against him. Noy had preserved a copy, but that did not avail him, as Prynne well knew that the misdemeanour was the letter itself; and Noy gave up the prosecution, as there was no remedy.

* Breviate of the Bishop's intolerable usurpations, p. 35.

he once wished, that "when they had cut off his ears, they had cut off his head." He closed his political existence by becoming an advocate for the Restoration; but, with his accustomed want of judgment, and intemperate zeal, had nearly injured the cause by his premature activity. At the Restoration some difficulty occurred to dispose of "busie Mr. Pryn," as Whitelocke calls him. It is said he wished to be one of the Barons of the Exchequer, but he was made the Keeper of the Records in the Tower, "purposely to employ his head from scribbling against the state and bishops;" where they put him to clear the Augean stable of our national antiquities, and see whether they could weary out his restless vigour. Prynne had, indeed, written till he found no antagonist would reply; and now he rioted in leafy folios, and proved himself to be one of the greatest paper-worms which ever crept into old books and mouldy records.

The literary character of Prynne is described by the happy epithet which Anthony Wood applies to him, "Voluminous Prynne." His great characteristic is opposed to that axiom of Hesiod so often quoted, that "half is better than the whole;" a secret which the matter-of-fact-men rarely discover. Wanting judgment, and the tact of good sense, these detailers have no power of selection from their stores, to make one prominent fact represent the hundred minuter ones that may follow it. Voluminously feeble, they imagine expansion is stronger than compression; and know not to generalize, while they only can deal in particulars. Prynne's speeches were just as voluminous as his writings; always deficient in judgment, and abounding in knowledge—he was always wearying others, but never could himself. He once made a speech to the House, to persuade them the king's concessions were sufficient ground for a treaty; it contains a complete narrative of all the transactions between the king, the Houses, and the army, from the beginning of the parliament; it takes up 140 octavo pages, and kept the house so long together, that the debates lasted from Monday morning till Tuesday morning!

Prynne's literary character may be illustrated by his singular book, "Histriomastix,"—where we observe how an author's exuberant learning, like corn heaped in a granary,

grows rank and musty, by a want of power to ventilate and stir about the heavy mass.

This paper-worm may first be viewed in his study, as painted by the picturesque Anthony Wood; an artist in the Flemish school:—

"His custom, when he studied, was to put on a long quilted cap, which came an inch over his eyes, serving as an umbrella to defend them from too much light, and *seldom eating any dinner*, would be every three hours maunching a roll of bread, and now and then refresh his exhausted spirits with ale brought to him by his servant" a custom to which Butler alludes,

> "Thou that with ale, or viler liquors,
> Didst inspire Withers, Prynne, and Vicars,
> And teach, though it were in despite
> Of nature and their stars to write."

The "HISTRIOMASTIX, the Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedie," is a ponderous quarto, ascending to about 1100 pages; a Puritan's invective against plays and players, accusing them of every kind of crime, including libels against church and state;* but it is more remarkable for the incalculable quotations and references foaming over the margins. Prynne scarcely ventures on the most trivial opinion, without calling to his aid whatever had been said in all nations and in all ages; and Cicero and Master Stubbs, Petrarch and Minutius Felix, Isaiah and Froissart's Chronicle, oddly associate in the ravings of erudition. Who, indeed, but the author "who seldom dined," could have quoted perhaps a thousand writers in one volume? † A wit of the times remarked of this *Helluo librorum*, that "Nature makes ever the dullest beasts most laborious, and the greatest feeders;" and Prynne has been

* Hume, in his History, has given some account of this enormous quarto; to which I refer the reader, vol. vi. chap. lii.

† Milton admirably characterizes Prynne's absurd learning, as well as his character, in his treatise on "The likeliest means to remove hirelings out of the church," as "a late hot querist for tythes, whom ye may know by *his wits lying ever beside him in the margin, to be ever beside his wits in the text.* A fierce Reformer once; now rankled with a contrary heat."

reproached with a weak digestion, for "returning things unaltered, which is a symptom of a feeble stomach."

When we examine this volume, often alluded to, the birth of the monster seems prodigious and mysterious; it combines two opposite qualities; it is so elaborate in its researches among the thousand authors quoted, that these required years to accumulate, and yet the matter is often temporary, and levelled at fugitive events and particular persons; thus the very formation of this mighty volume seems paradoxical. The secret history of this book is as extraordinary as the book itself, and is a remarkable evidence how, in a work of immense erudition, the arts of a wily sage involved himself, and whoever was concerned in his book, in total ruin. The author was pilloried, fined, and imprisoned; his publisher condemned in the penalty of five hundred pounds, and barred for ever from printing and selling books, and the licenser removed and punished. Such was the fatality attending the book of a man whose literary voracity produced one of the most tremendous indigestions, in a malady of writing.

It was on examining Prynne's trial I discovered the secret history of the "Histriomastix." Prynne was seven years in writing this work, and, what is almost incredible, it was near four years passing through the press. During that interval the eternal scribbler was daily gorging himself with voluminous food, and daily fattening his cooped-up capon. The temporary sedition and libels were the gradual Mosaic in-layings through this shapeless mass.

It appears that the volume of 1100 quarto pages originally cosisted of little more than a quire of paper; but Prynne found insuperable difficulties in procuring a licenser, oven for this infant Hercules. Dr. Goode deposed that—

"About eight years ago Mr. Prynne brought to him a quire of paper to license, which he refused; and he recollected the circumstance by having held an argument with Prynne on his severe reprehension on the unlawfulness of a man to put on women's apparel, which, the good-humoured doctor asserted was not always unlawful; for suppose Mr. Prynne yourself, as a Christian, was persecuted by pagans, think you not if you disguised yourself in your maid's apparel, you did well?"

Prynne sternly answered that he thought himself bound rather to yield to death than to do so.

Another licenser, Dr. Harris, deposed, that about seven years ago—

"Mr. Prynne came to him to license a treatise concerning stage-plays; but he would not allow of the same;"—and adds, "So this man did deliver this book when it was young and tender, and would have had it then printed; but it is since grown seven times bigger, and seven times worse."

Prynne not being able to procure these licensers, had recourse to another, Buckner, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was usual for the licenser to examine the MS. before it went to the press; but Prynne either tampered with Buckner, or so confused his intellects by keeping his multifarious volume in the press for four years; and sometimes, I suspect, by numbering folios for pages, as appears in the work, that the examination of the licenser gradually relaxed; and he declares in his defence that he had only licensed part of it. The bookseller, Sparks, was, indeed, a noted publisher of what was then called "unlawful and unlicensed books;" and he had declared that it was "an excellent book, which would be called in, and then sell well." He confesses the book had been more than three years in the press, and had cost him three hundred pounds.

The speech of Noy, the attorney-general, conveys some notion of the work itself; sufficiently curious as giving the feelings of those times against the Puritans.

"Who he means by his *modern innovators* in the church, and by *cringing and ducking* to altars, a fit term to bestow on the church; he learned it of the *canters*, being used among them. The musick in the church, the charitable term he giveth it, is not to be a noise of men, but rather a *bleating of brute beasts;* choristers *bellow* the tenor, as it were oxen; *bark* a counterpoint as a kennel of dogs; *roar* out a treble like a sort of bulls; *grunt* out a bass, as it were a number of hogs. Bishops he calls the *silk and satin divines;* says Christ was a Puritan, in his Index. He falleth on those things that have not relation to stage-plays, musick in the church, dancing, new-years' gifts, &c.—then upon al-

tars, images, hair of men and women, bishops and bonfires. Cards and tables do offend him, and perukes do fall within the compass of his theme. His end is to persuade the people that we are returning back again to paganism, and to persuade them to go and serve God in another country, as many are gone already, and set up new laws and fancies among themselves. Consider what may come of it."

The decision of the Lords of the Star-chamber was dictated by passion as much as justice. Its severity exceeded the crime of having produced an unreadable volume of indigested erudition; and the learned scribbler was too hardly used, scarcely escaping with life. Lord Cottington, amazed at the mighty volume, too bluntly affirmed that Prynne did not write this book alone; "he either assisted the devil, or was assisted by the devil." But secretary Cooke delivered a sensible and temperate speech; remarking on all its false erudition, that,

"By this vast book of Mr. Prynne's, it appeareth that he hath read more than he hath studied, and studied more than he hath considered. He calleth his book 'Histriomastix;' but therein he showeth himself like unto Ajax Anthropomastix, as the Grecians called him, the scourge of all mankind, that is, the whipper and the whip."

Such is the history of a man whose greatness of character was clouded over and lost in a fatal passion for scribbling; such is the history of a voluminous author whose genius was such that he could write a folio much easier than a page; and "seldom dined" that he might quote "squadrons of authorities."*

* The very expression Prynne himself uses, see p. 668 of the Histriomastix; where having gone through "three squadrons," he commences a fresh chapter thus: "The fourth squadron of authorities is the venerable troope of 70 several renowned ancient fathers;" and he throws in more than he promised, all which are quoted volume and page, as so many "play-confounding arguments." He has, perhaps, quoted from three to four hundred authors on a single point.

GENIUS AND ERUDITION,

THE VICTIMS OF IMMODERATE VANITY.

The name of Toland is more familiar than his character, yet his literary portrait has great singularity; he must be classed among the "Authors by Profession," an honour secured by near fifty publications; and we shall discover that he aimed to combine with the literary character, one peculiarly his own. With higher talents and more learning than have been conceded to him, there ran in his mind an original vein of thinking. Yet his whole life exhibits in how small a degree great intellectual powers, when scattered through all the forms which Vanity suggests, will contribute to an author's social comforts, or raise him in public esteem. Toland was fruitful in his productions, and still more in his projects; yet it is mortifying to estimate the result of all the intense activity of the life of an author of genius, which terminates in being placed among these Calamities.

Toland's birth was probably illegitimate; a circumstance which influenced the formation of his character. Baptized in ridicule, he had nearly fallen a victim to Mr. Shandy's system of Christian names, for he bore the strange ones of *Janus Junius*, which, when the school-roll was called over every morning, afforded perpetual merriment, till the master blessed him with plain *John*, which the boy adopted, and lived in quiet. I must say something on the names themselves, perhaps as ridiculous! May they not have influenced the character of Toland, since they certainly describe it? He had all the shiftings of the double-faced *Janus*, and the revolutionary politics of the ancient *Junius*. His godfathers sent him into the world in cruel mockery, thus to remind their Irish boy of the fortunes that await the desperately bold: nor did Toland forget the strong-marked designations; for to his most objectionable work, the Latin tract entitled *Pantheisticon*, descriptive of what some have considered as an atheistical society, he subscribes these appropriate names, which at the time were imagined to be fictitious.

Toland ran away from school and popery. When in after-life he was reproached with native obscurity he ostentatiously produced a testimonial of his birth and family, hatched up at a convent of Irish Franciscans in Germany, where the good Fathers subscribed, with their ink tinged with their Rhenish, to his most ancient descent, referring to the Irish history! which they considered as a parish register, fit for the suspected son of an Irish Priest!

Toland, from early life, was therefore dependent on patrons; but illegitimate birth creates strong and determined characters, and Toland had all the force and the originality of self-independence. He was a seed thrown by chance, to grow of itself wherever it falls.

This child of fortune studied at four Universities; at Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leyden; from the latter he passed to Oxford, and, in the Bodleian Library, collected the materials for his after-studies.

He loved study, and even at a later periods declares, that "no employment or condition of life shall make me disrelish the lasting entertainment of books." In his "Description of Epsom," he observes, that the taste for retirement, reading, and contemplation, promotes the true relish for select company, and says,

"Thus I remove at pleasure, as I grow weary of the country or the town, as I avoid a crowd or seek company.—Here then let me have *books and bread* enough without dependance; a bottle of hermitage and a plate of olives for a select friend; with an early rose to present a young lady as an emblem of discretion no less than of beauty."

At Oxford appeared that predilection for paradoxes and over-curious speculations, which formed afterwards the marking feature of his literary character. He has been unjustly contemned as a sciolist; he was the correspondent of Leibnitz, Le Clerc, and Bayle, and was a learned author when scarcely a man. He first published a dissertation on the strange tragical death of Regulus, and proved it a Roman legend. A greater paradox might have been his projected speculation on Job, to demonstrate that only the dialogue was genuine; the rest being the work of some idle Rabbin, who had in-

vented a monstrous story to account for the extraordinary afflictions of that model of a divine mind. Speculations of so much learning and ingenuity are uncommon in a young man; but Toland was so unfortunate as to value his own merits, before those who did not care to hear of them.

Hardy vanity was to recompense him, perhaps he thought, for that want of fortune and connections, which raised duller spirits above him. Vain, loquacious, inconsiderate, and daring, he assumed the dictatorship of a coffee-house, and obtained easy conquests, which he mistook for glorious ones, over the graver fellows, who had for many a year awfully petrified their own colleges. He gave more violent offence by his new opinions on religion. An anonymous person addressed two letters to this new Heresiarch, solemn and monitory.* Toland's answer is as honourable as that of his monitor's. This passage is forcibly conceived:

"To what purpose should I study here or elsewhere, were I an *atheist* or *deist*, for one of the two you take me to be? What a condition to mention virtue, if I believed there was no God, or one so impotent that could not, or so malicious that would not, reveal himself! Nay, though I granted a Deity, yet, if nothing of me subsisted after death, what laws could bind, what incentives could move me to common honesty? Annihilation would be a sanctuary for all my sins, and put an end to my crimes with myself. Believe me I am not so indifferent to the evils of the present life, but, without the expectation of a better, I should soon suspend the mechanism of my body, and resolve into unconscious atoms."

This early moment of his life proved to be its crisis, and the first step he took decided his after-progress. His first great work of "Christianity not Mysterious," produced immense consequences. Toland persevered in denying that it was designed as any attack on Christianity, but only on those subtractions, additions, and other alterations, which have corrupted that pure institution. The work, at least, like its title, is "Mysterious."† Toland passed over to Ireland, but his

* These letters will interest every religious person; they may be found in To'and's posthumous works, vol. ii. p. 295.

† Toland pretends to prove that "there is nothing in the Christian

book having got there before him, the author beheld himself anathematized; the pulpits thundered, and it was dangerous to be seen conversing with him. A jury who confessed they could not comprehend a page of his book, condemned it to be burned. Toland now felt a tenderness for his person; and the humane Molyneaux, the friend of Locke, while he censures the imprudent vanity of our author, gladly witnessed the flight of "the poor gentleman." But South, indignant at our English moderation in his own controversy with Sherlock on some doctrinal points of the Trinity, congratulates the Archbishop of Dublin on the Irish persecution; and equally witty and intolerant, he writes on Toland, "Your Parliament presently sent him packing, and, without the help of a *fagot*, soon made the kingdom *too hot* for him."

Toland was accused of an intention to found a new sect, as South calls them, of "Mahometan-Christians." Many were stigmatized as *Tolandists;* but the disciples of a man who never procured for their prophet a bit of dinner or a new wig, for he was frequently wanting both, were not to be feared as enthusiasts. The persecution from the church only rankled in the breast of Toland, and excited unextinguishable revenge.

He now breathed awhile from the bonfire of theology; and our *Janus* turned his political face. He edited Milton's voluminous politics, and Harrington's fantastical Oceana, and, as his "Christianity not Mysterious" had stamped his religion with something worse than heresy, so in politics he was branded as a Commonwealth's-man. Toland had evidently strong nerves; for him, opposition produced controversy,

Religion, not only which is contrary to reason, but even which is above it."—He made use of some arguments (says Le Clerc) that were drawn from Locke's Treatise on the Human Understanding. I have seen in MS. a finished treatise by Locke, on Religion, addressed to Lady Shaftesbury; Locke gives it as a translation from the French. I regret my account is so imperfect; but the possessor may, perhaps, be induced to give it to the public. The French philosophers have drawn their first waters from the English authors; and Toland, Tindale, and Woolston, with Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, and Locke, were among their earliest acquisitions.

which he loved, and controversy produced books, by which he lived.

But let it not be imagined that Toland affected to be considered as no Christian, or avowed himself as a republican. "Civil and religious toleration (he says) have been the two main objects of all my writings." He declares himself to be only a primitive Christian, and a pure whig. But an author must not be permitted to understand himself so much more clearly than he has enabled his readers to do. His mysterious conduct may be detected in his want of moral integrity.

He had the art of explaining away his own words, as in his first controversy about the word *mystery* in religion, and he exults in his artifice; for, in a letter, where he is soliciting the minister for employment, he says :—"The church is much exasperated against me; yet as that is the heaviest article, so it is undoubtedly the easiest conquered, and I know *the infallible method of doing it.*" And, in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he promises to *reform his religion to that prelate's liking!* He took the sacrament as an opening for the negotiation.

What can be more explicit than his recantation at the close of his *Vindicius Liberius?* After telling us that he had withdrawn from sale, after the second edition, his "'Christianity not Mysterious,' when I perceived what real or pretended offence it had given," he concludes thus :—"Being now arrived to years that will not wholly excuse inconsiderateness in resolving, or precipitance in acting, I firmly hope that my *persuasion* and *practice* will show me *to be a true Christian;* that my due *conformity* to the *public worship* may prove me to be *a good Churchman;* and that my untainted loyalty to King William will argue me to be a stanch Commonwealth's-man. That I shall continue all my life a friend to religion, an enemy to superstition, a supporter of good kings, and a deposer of tyrants."

Observe, this *Vindicius Liberius* was published on his return from one of his political tours in Germany. His views were then of a very different nature from those of controversial divinity; but it was absolutely necessary to allay the storm the church had raised against him. We begin now to understand a little better the character of Toland. These literary

adventurers, with heroic pretensions, can practise the meanest artifices, and shrink themselves into nothing to creep out of a hole. How does this recantation agree with the "Nazarenus," and the other theological works which Toland was publishing all his life? Posterity only can judge of men's characters; it takes in at a glance the whole of a life; but contemporaries only view a part, often apparently unconnected and at variance, when in fact it is neither. This recantation is full of the spirit of *Janus Junius* Toland.

But we are concerned chiefly with Toland's literary character. He was so confirmed an author, that he never published one book without promising another. He refers to others in MS.: and some of his most curious works are posthumous. He was a great artificer of title-pages, covering them with a promising luxuriance; and in this way recommended his works to the booksellers. He had an odd taste for running inscriptions of whimsical crabbed terms; the gold dust of erudition to gild over a title; such as "Tetradymus, Hodegus, Clidopharus;" "Adeisidaemon, or the Unsuperstitious." He pretends these affected titles indicated their several subjects; but the genius of Toland could descend to literary quackery.

He had the art of propagating books; his small life of Milton produced several; besides the complacency he felt in extracting long passages from Milton against the bishops. In this life, his attack on the authenticity of the *Eikon Basilike* of Charles I. branched into another on supposititious writings; and this included the spurious gospels. Association of ideas is a nursing mother to the fertility of authorship. The spurious gospels opened a fresh theological campaign, and produced his "Amyntor." There was no end in provoking an author, who, in writing the life of a poet, could contrive to put the authenticity of the Testament to the proof.

Amid his philosophical labours, his *vanity* induced him to seize on all temporary topics to which his facility and ingenuity gave currency. The choice of his subjects forms an amusing catalogue; for he had "Remarks" and "Projects" as fast as events were passing. He wrote on "The Art of Governing by Parties," on "Anglia Libera," "Reasons for

Naturalizing the Jews," on "The Art of Canvassing at Elections," On raising a National Bank without Capital," "The State Anatomy," "Dunkirk or Dover," &c. &c. These, and many like these, set off with catching titles, proved to the author that a man of genius may be capable of writing on all topics at all times, and make the country his debtor without benefiting his own creditors.*

There was a moment in Toland's life, when he felt, or thought he felt, fortune in his grasp. He was then floating on the Ideal waves of the South-sea bubble. The poor author, elated with a notion that he was rich enough to print at his own cost, dispersed copies of his absurd "Pantheisticon." He describes a society of Pantheists, who worship the universe as God; a mystery much greater than those he attacked in Christianity. Their prayers are passages from Cicero and Seneca, and they chant long poems instead of psalms; so that in their zeal they endured a little tediousness. The next objectionable circumstance in this wild ebullition of philosophical wantonness is, the apparent burlesque of some liturgies; and a wag having inserted in some copies an impious prayer to Bacchus, Toland suffered for the folly of others as well as his own.† With the South-sea bubble, vanished Toland's desire of printing books at his own risk; and thus relieved the world from the weight of more *Pantheisticons!*

With all this bustle of authorship, amidst temporary publi-

* In examining the original papers of Toland, which are preserved, I found some of his agreements with booksellers. For his description of Epsom he was to receive only four guineas in case 1000 were sold. He received ten guineas for his pamphlet on Naturalizing the Jews, and ten guineas more in case Bernard Lintott sold 2000. The words of this agreement run thus: "Whenever Mr. Toland calls for ten guineas, after the first of February next, I promise to pay them, if I *cannot show* that 200 of the copies remain unsold." What a sublime person is an author! What a misery is authorship! The great philosopher who creates systems that are to alter the face of his country, must stand at the counter to count out 200 unsold copies!

† Des Maiseaux frees Toland from this calumny, and hints at his own personal knowledge of the author—but he does not know what a foreign writer authenticates that this blasphemous address to Bacchus is a parody of a prayer in the Roman ritual, wrote two centuries before by a very proper society of *Pantheists*, a club of drunkards!

cations which required such prompt ingenuity, and elaborate works which matured the fruits of early studies, Toland was still not a sedentary writer. I find that he often traveled on the continent; but how could a guinealess author so easily transport himself from Flanders to Germany, and appear at home in the courts of Berlin, Dresden, and Hanover? Perhaps we may discover a concealed feature in the character of our ambiguous philosopher. In the only life we have of Toland, by Des Maiseaux, prefixed to his posthumous works, he tells us that Toland was at the court of Berlin, but "an incident, *too ludicrous to be mentioned*, obliged him to leave that place sooner than he expected." Here is an incident in a narrative clearly marked out, but never to be supplied! Whatever this incident was, it had this important result, that it sent Toland away in haste; but *why* was he there? Our chronological biographer,* "good easy man," suspects nothing more extraordinary when he tells us Toland was at Berlin or Hanover, than when he finds him at Epsom; imagines Toland only went to the electoral Princess Sophia, and the Queen of Prussia, who were "ladies of sublime genius," to entertain them by vexing some grave German divines, with philosophical conferences, and paradoxical conundrums; all the ravings of Toland's idleness.†

This secret history of Toland can only be picked out by fine threads. He professed to be a literary character—he had opened a periodical "literary correspondence," as he terms it, with Prince Eugene; such as we have witnessed in

* Warburton has well described Des Maiseaux: "All the Life-writers we have had are, indeed, strange insipid creatures. The verbose tasteless Frenchman seems to lay it down as a principle that every life must be a book, and what is worse, it proves a book without a life; for what do we know of Boileau after all his tedious stuff?"

† One of these philosophical conferences has been preserved by Beausobre, who was indeed the party concerned. He inserted it in the "Bibliothèque Germanique," a curious literary journal in 50 volumes, written by L'Enfant, Beausobre, and Formey. It is very copious, and very curious, and is preserved in the General Dictionary, art. Toland. The parties, after a warm contest, were very wisely interrupted by the Queen, when she discovered they had exhausted their learning, and were beginning to rail at each other.

our days by Grimm and La Harpe, addressed to some northern Princes. He was a favourite with the electoral Princess Sophia, and the Queen of Prussia, to whom he addressed his "Letters to Serena." Was he a political agent? Yet how was it that Toland was often driven home by distressed circumstances? He seems not to have been a practical politician, for he managed his own affairs very ill. Was the political intriguer rather a suspected, than a confidential servant of all his masters and mistresses? for it is evident no one cared for him! The absence of moral integrity, was probably never disguised by the loquacious vanity of this literary adventurer.

In his posthumous works are several "Memorials," for the Earl of Oxford, which throw a new light over a union of political *Espionage* with the literary character, which finally concluded in producing that extraordinary one, which the political imagination of Toland created in all the obscurity and heat of his reveries.

In one of these "Memorials," forcibly written and full of curiosity, Toland remonstrates with the minister for his marked neglect of him; opens the scheme of a political tour, where, like *Guthrie*, he would be content with his *quarterage*. He defines his character: for the independent Whig affects to spurn at the office, though he might not shrink at the duties of a spy.

"Whether such a person, sir, who is *neither minister nor spy*, and as a *lover of learning will be welcome everywhere*, may not prove of extraordinary use to my Lord Treasurer, as well as to his predecessor *Burleigh*, who employed such, I leave his lordship and you to consider."

Still *this character*, whatever title may designate it, is inferior in dignity and importance to that which Toland afterwards projected, and which portrays him where his life-writer has not given a touch from his brush; it is a political curiosity.

"I laid an honester scheme of serving my country, your lordship, and myself: for, seeing it was neither convenient for you, nor a thing at all desired by me, that *I should appear in any public post*, I sincerely proposed, as occasions should

offer, to communicate to your lordship my observations on *the temper of the ministry, the dispositions of the people, the condition of our enemies, or allies abroad*, and what I might think *most expedient in every conjuncture;* which advice you were to follow in whole, or in part, or not at all, as your own superior wisdom should direct. My general acquaintance, the several languages I speak, the experience I have acquired in foreign affairs, and being engaged in no interest at home, besides that of the public, should qualify me in some measure for this province. ALL WISE MINISTERS HAVE EVER HAD SUCH PRIVATE MONITORS. As much as I thought myself fit, or was thought so by others, for such general observations, so much have I ever abhorred, my lord, *those particular observers we call* SPIES; but I despise the calumny no less than I detest the thing.—Of such general observations, you should have perused a far greater number than I thought fit to present hitherto, had I discovered, by due effects, that they were acceptable from *me;* for they must unavoidably be received from *somebody*, unless a minister were omniscient—yet I soon had good reason to believe I was not designed for the man; whatever the original sin could be that made me incapable of such a trust, and which I now begin to suspect. Without direct answers to my proposals, how could I know whether I helped my friends elsewhere, or betrayed them contrary to my intentions! and accordingly I have for some time been very cautious and reserved. But if your lordship will enter into any measures with me, to procure *the good of my country*, I shall be more ready to *serve* your lordship in this, or in some becoming capacity, than any other minister. They who confided to my management affairs of a higher nature, have found me exact as well as secret. My impenetrable negotiation at Vienna (hid under the pretence of curiosity) was not only applauded by the prince that employed me, but also proportionably rewarded. And here, my lord, give me leave to say that I have found England miserably served abroad since this change; and our ministers at home are sometimes as great strangers to the genius as to the persons of those with whom they have to do.—At —— you have placed the most unacceptable man in the world, one that lived in a scandalous mis-

understanding with the minister of the States at another court, one that has been the laughing-stock of all courts, for his senseless haughtiness, and most ridiculous airs, and one that can never judge aright, unless by accident, in anything."

The discarded, or the suspected *private Monitor of the Minister*, warms into the tenderest language of political amour, and mourns their rupture but as the quarrels of lovers.

"I cannot, from all these considerations, but in the nature of a lover, complain of your present neglect, and be solicitous for your future care."—And again, "I have made use of the simile of a lover, and as such, indeed, I thought fit, once for all, to come to a thorough explanation, resolved, if my affection be not killed by your unkindness, to become indissolubly yours."

Such is the nice artifice which colours with a pretended love of his country, the sordidness of the political intriguer, giving clean names to filthy things. But this view of the political face of our *Janus* is not complete till we discover the levity he could carry into politics when not disguised by more pompous pretensions. I shall give two extracts from letters composed in a different spirit.

"I am bound for Germany, though first for Flanders, and next for Holland. I believe I shall be pretty well accommodated for this voyage, which I expect will be very short. Lord! how near was *my old woman* being a queen! and your humble servant being *at his ease*."

His *old woman* was the electoral Princess Sophia; and *his ease* is what patriots distinguish as *the love of their country!* Again—

"The October Club, if rightly managed, will be rare stuff *to work the ends of any party*. I sent such an account of these wights to an *old gentlewoman* of my acquaintance, as in the midst of fears (the change of ministry) will make her laugh."

After all his voluminous literature, and his refined politics, Toland lived and died the life of an Author by Profession, in an obscure lodging at a country carpenter's, in great distress. He had still one patron left, who was himself poor, Lord Molesworth, who promised him, if he lived,

"Bare necessaries; these are but cold comfort to a man of your spirit and desert; but 'tis all I dare promise! 'Tis an ungrateful age, and we must bear with it the best we may till we can mend it."

And his lordship tells of his unsuccessful application to some Whig lord for Toland; and concludes,

"'Tis a sad monster of a man, and not worthy of further notice."

I have observed that Toland had strong nerves; he neither feared controversies, nor that which closes all. Having examined his manuscripts, I can sketch a minute picture of the last days of our "author by profession." At the carpenter's lodgings he drew up a list of all his books—they were piled on four chairs, to the amount of 155—most of them works which evince the most erudite studies; and as Toland's learning has been very lightly esteemed, it may be worth notice that some of his MSS. were transcribed in Greek.* To this list he adds, "I need not recite those in the closet with the unbound books and pamphlets; nor my trunk, wherein are all my papers and MSS." I perceive he circulated his

* I subjoin, for the gratification of the curious, the titles of a few of these books. Spanhemii Opera; Clerici Pentateuchus; Constantini Lexicon Græco Latinum; Fabricii Codex Apocryphus Vet. et Nov. Test.; Synesius de Regno; Historia imaginum cœlestium Gosselini, 16 volumes; Caryophili Dissertationes; Vonde Hardt Ephemerides Philologicæ; Trismegisti Opera; Recoldus, et alia Mahomedica; all the Works of Buxtorf; Salviani Opera; Reland de Relig. Mahomedica; Galli Opuscula Mythologica; Apollodori Bibliotheca; Palingenius; Apuleius; and every classical author of antiquity. As he was then employed in his curious history of the Druids, of which only a specimen is preserved, we may trace his researches in the following books: Luydii Archæologia Britannica; Old Irish Testament, &c.; Maccurtin's History of Ireland; O'Flaherty's Ogygia; Epistolarum Hibernicarum; Usher's Religion of the ancient Irish; Brand's Isles of Orkney and Zetland; Pezron's Antiquities des Celtes.

There are some singular papers among these fragments. One title of a work is "Priesthood without Priestcraft; or Superstition distinguished from Religion, Dominion from Order, and Bigotry from Reason, in the most principal Controversies about Church-government, which at present divide and deform Christianity." He has composed "A Psalm before Sermon in praise of Asinity." There are other singular titles and works in the mass of his papers.

MSS. among his friends, for there is a list by him as he lent them, among which are ladies as well as gentlemen, *esprits forts!*

Never has author died more in character than Toland; he may be said to have died with a busy pen in his hand. Having suffered from an unskilful physician, he avenged himself in his own way; for there was found on his table an "Essay on Physic without Physicians." The dying patriot-trader was also writing a preface for a political pamphlet on *the danger of mercenary Parliaments*—and the philosopher was composing his own epitaph; one more proof of the ruling passion predominating in death; but why should a *Pantheist* be solicitous to perpetuate his genius and his fame! I shall transcribe a few lines; surely they are no evidence of Atheism!

"Omnium Literarum excultor,
ac linguarum plus decem sciens;
Veritatis propugnator,
Libertatis assertor;
nullus autem sectator aut cliens,
nec minis, nec malis est inflexus,
quin quam elegit, viam perageret;
utili honestum anteferens,
Spiritus cum æthereo patre,
à quo prodiit olim, conjungitur;
corpus item, Naturæ cedens,
in materno gremio reponitur.
Ipse vero esternum est resurrecturus,
at idem futurus TOLANDUS nunquam."*

* A lover of all literature,
and knowing more than ten languages;
a champion for truth,
an assertor of liberty,
but the follower or dependant of no man;
nor could menaces nor fortune bend him;
the way he had chosen he pursued,
preferring honesty to his interest.
His spirit is joined with its ethereal father
from whom it originally proceeded;
his body likewise, yielding to Nature,
is again laid in the lap of its mother:
but he is about to rise again in eternity,
yet never to be the same TOLAND more.

One would have imagined that the writer of his own panegyrical epitaph would have been careful to have transmitted to posterity a copy of his features; but I know of no portrait of Toland. His patrons seem never to have been generous, nor his disciples grateful; they mortified rather than indulged the egotism of his genius. There appeared, indeed, an elegy, shortly after the death of Toland, so ingeniously contrived, that it is not clear whether he is eulogized or ridiculed. Amid its solemnity these lines betray the sneer. "Has," exclaimed the eulogist of the ambiguous philosopher,

> "Each jarring element gone angry home?
> And *Master Toland* a *Non-ens* become?"—

Locke, with all the prescient sagacity of that clear understanding which penetrated under the secret folds of the human heart, anticipated the life of Toland at its commencement. He admired the genius of the man; but, while he valued his parts and learning, he dreaded their result. In a letter I find these passages, which were then so prophetic, and are now so instructive:—

"If his exceeding great value of himself do not deprive the world of that usefulness that his parts, if rightly conducted, might be of, I shall be very glad.—The hopes young men give, of what use they will make of their parts, is, to me, the encouragement of being concerned for them; but, *if vanity increases with age, I always fear whither it will lead a man.*"

GENIUS, THE DUPE OF ITS PASSIONS.

Pope said that Steele, though he led a careless and vicious life, had nevertheless a love and reverence for virtue. The life of Steele was not that of a retired scholar; hence his moral character becomes more instructive. He was one of those whose hearts are the dupes of their imaginations, and who are hurried through life by the most despotic volition. He always preferred his caprices to his interests; or, according to his own notion, very ingenious, but not a little absurd,

"he was always of the humour of preferring the state of his mind to that of his fortune." The result of this principle of moral conduct was, that a man of the most admirable abilities was perpetually acting like a fool, and, with a warm attachment to virtue, was the frailest of human beings.

In the first act of his life we find the seed that developed itself in the succeeding ones. His uncle could not endure a hero for his heir: but Steele had seen a marching regiment; a sufficient reason with him to enlist as a private in the horse-guards: cocking his hat, and putting on a broad-sword, jack-boots, and shoulder-belt, with the most generous feelings he forfeited a very good estate.—At length Ensign Steele's frank temper and wit conciliated esteem, and extorted admiration, and the ensign became a favourite leader in all the dissipations of the town. All these were the ebullitions of genius, which had not yet received a legitimate direction. Amid these orgies, however, it was often pensive, and forming itself; for it was in the height of these irregularities that Steele composed his "Christian Hero," a moral and religious treatise, which the contritions of every morning dictated, and to which the disorders of every evening added another penitential page. Perhaps the genius of Steele was never so ardent and so pure as at this period; and in his elegant letter to his commander, the celebrated Lord Cutts, he gives an interesting account of the origin of this production, which none but one deeply imbued with its feelings could have so forcibly described.

"*Tower Guard, March* 23, 1701.

"My Lord,

"The address of the following papers is so very much due to your lordship, that they are but a mere report of what has passed upon my guard to my commander; for they were writ upon duty, when the mind was perfectly disengaged, and at leisure, in the silent watch of the night, to run over the busy dream of the day; and the vigilance which obliges us to suppose an enemy always near us, has awakened a sense that there is a restless and subtle one which constantly attends our steps, and meditates our ruin." *

* Mr. Nichols's "Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard Steele." vol. i. p. 77.

To this solemn and monitory work he prefixed his name, from this honourable motive, that it might serve as "a standing testimony against himself, and make him ashamed of understanding, and seeming to feel what was virtuous, and living so quite contrary a life." Do we not think that no one less than a saint is speaking to us? And yet he is still nothing more than Ensign Steele! He tells us that this grave work made him consider, who had been no undelightful companion, as a disagreeable fellow—and "The Christian Hero," by his own words, appears to have fought off several foolhardy geniuses who were for "trying their valour on him," supposing a saint was necessarily a poltroon. Thus "The Christian Hero," finding himself slighted by his loose companions, sat down and composed a most laughable comedy, "The Funeral;" and with all the frankness of a man who cares not to hide his motives, he tells us, that after his religious work he wrote the comedy because "nothing can make the town so fond of a man as a successful play." * The historian who had to record such strange events, following close on each other, as an author publishing a book of piety, and then a farce, could never have discovered the secret motive of the versatile writer, had not that writer possessed the most honest frankness.

Steele was now at once a man of the town and its censor, and wrote lively essays on the follies of the day in an enormous black peruke which cost him fifty guineas! He built an elegant villa, but, as he was always inculcating economy, he dates from "The Hovel." He detected the fallacy of the South-sea scheme, while he himself invented projects, neither inferior in magnificence nor in misery. He even turned alchemist, and wanted to coin gold, merely to distribute it.

The most striking incident in the life of this man of volition, was his sudden marriage with a young lady who attended his first wife's funeral—struck by her angelical beauty, if we trust to his raptures. Yet this sage, who would have written so well on the choice of a wife, united himself to a character the most uncongenial to his own; cold, reserved, and most

* Steele has given a delightful piece of self-biography, towards the end of his "Apology for himself and his writings," p. 80, 4to.

anxiously prudent in her attention to money, she was of a temper which every day grew worse by the perpetual imprudence and thoughtlessness of his own. He calls her "Prue" in fondness and reproach; she was Prudery itself! His adoration was permanent, and so were his complaints; and they never parted but with bickerings—yet he could not suffer her absence, for he was writing to her three or four passionate notes in a day, which are dated from his office, or his bookseller's, or from some friend's house—he has risen in the midst of dinner to despatch a line to "Prue," to assure her of his affection since noon.*—Her presence or her absence was equally painful to him.

* In the "Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard Steele," edition of 1809, are preserved these extraordinary love-despatches; "Prue" used poor Steele at times very ill; indeed Steele seems to have conceived that his warm affections were all she required, for Lady Steele was usually left whole days in solitude, and frequently in want of a guinea, when Steele could not raise one. He, however, sometimes remonstrates with her very feelingly. The following note is an instance:—

"Dear Wife,

"I have been in great pain of body and mind since I came out. You are extremely cruel to a generous nature, which has a tenderness for you that renders your least *dishumour* insupportably afflicting. After short starts of passion, not to be inclined to reconciliation, is what is against to all rules of Christianity and justice. When I come home, I beg to be kindly received; or this will have as ill an effect upon my fortune, as on my mind and body."

In a postscript to another billet, he thus "sneers at Lady Steele's excessive attention to money:"—

"Your man Sam owes me threepence, which must be deducted in the account between you and me; therefore, pray take care to get it in, or stop it."

Such despatches as the following were sent off three or four times in a day:—

"I beg of you not to be impatient, though it be an hour before you see

"Your obliged husband, R. Steele."

"Dear Prue,

"Don't be displeased that I do not come home till eleven o'clock.

"Yours, ever."

"Dear Prue,

"Forgive me dining abroad, and let Will carry the papers to Buckley's.

"Your fond devoted R. S."

Yet Steele, gifted at all times with the susceptibility of genius, was exercising the finest feelings of the heart; the same generosity of temper which deluded his judgment, and invigorated his passions, rendered him a tender and pathetic dramatist; a most fertile essayist; a patriot without private views; an enemy whose resentment died away in raillery; and a friend, who could warmly press the hand that chastised him. Whether in administration, or expelled the House; whether affluent, or flying from his creditors; in the fulness of his heart he, perhaps, secured his own happiness, and lived on, like some wits, extempore. But such men, with all their virtues and all their genius, live only for themselves.

Steele, in the waste of his splendid talents, had raised sudden enmities and transient friendships. The world uses such men as Eastern travellers do fountains; they drink their waters, and when their thirst is appeased, turn their backs on them. Steele lived to be forgotten. He opened his career with folly; he hurried through it in a tumult of existence; and he closed it by an involuntary exile, amid the wrecks of his fortune and his mind.

Steele, in one of his numerous periodical works, the twelfth number of the Theatre, has drawn an exquisite contrast between himself and his friend Addison: it is a cabinet picture. Steele's careful pieces, when warm with his subject, had a higher spirit, a richer flavour, than the equable softness of Addison, who is only beautiful.

"There never was a more strict friendship than between

"Dear Prue,

"I am very sleepy and tired, but could not think of closing my eyes till I had told you I am, dearest creature, your most affectionate faithful husband, R. Steele.

"From the Press, One in the morning."

It would seem by the following note, that this hourly account of himself was in consequence of the connubial mandate of his fair despot:—

"Dear Prue,

"It is a strange thing, because you are handsome, that you will not behave youself with the obedience that people of worse features do- but that I must be always giving you an account of every trifle and minute of my time. I send this to tell you I am waiting to be sent for again when my Lord Wharton is stirring."

these gentlemen; nor had they ever any difference but what proceeded from their different way of pursuing the same thing: the one, with patience, foresight, and temperate address, always waited and stemmed the torrent; while the other often plunged himself into it, and was as often taken out by the temper of him who stood weeping on the bank for his safety, whom he could not dissuade from leaping into it. Thus these two men lived for some years last past, shunning each other, but still preserving the most passionate concern for their mutual welfare. But when they met, they were as unreserved as boys; and talked of the greatest affairs, upon which they saw where they differed, without pressing (what they knew impossible) to convert each other."

If Steele had the honour of the invention of those periodical papers which first enlightened the national genius by their popular instruction, he is himself a remarkable example of the moral and the literary character perpetually contending in the man of volition.

LITERARY DISAPPOINTMENTS DISORDERING THE INTELLECT.

LELAND AND COLLINS.

This awful calamity may be traced in the fate of Leland and Collins: the one exhausted the finer faculties of his mind in the grandest views, and sunk under gigantic tasks; the other enthusiast sacrificed his reason and his happiness to his imagination.

Leland, the father of our antiquaries, was an accomplished scholar; and his ample mind had embraced the languages of antiquity, those of his own age, and the ancient ones of his own country: thus he held all human learning by its three vast chains. He travelled abroad; and he cultivated poetry with the ardour he could even feel for the acquisition of words. On his return home, among other royal favours, he was appointed by Henry VIII. the king's antiquary, a title honourably created for Leland; for with him it became extinct. By

this office he was empowered to search after English antiquities; to review the libraries of all the religious institutions, and to bring the records of antiquity "out of deadly darkness into lively light." This extensive power fed a passion already formed by the study of our old rude historians; his elegant taste perceived that they wanted those graces which he could lend them.

Six years were occupied, by uninterrupted travel and study, to survey our national antiquities; to note down everything observable for the history of the country and the honour of the nation. What a magnificent view has he sketched of this learned journey! In search of knowledge, Leland wandered on the sea-coasts and in the midland; surveyed towns and cities, and rivers, castles, cathedrals, and monasteries; tumuli, coins, and inscriptions; collected authors; transcribed MSS. If antiquarianism pored, genius too meditated in this sublime industry.

Another six years were devoted to shape and to polish the immense collections he had amassed. All this untired labour and continued study were rewarded by Henry VIII. It is delightful, from its rarity, to record the gratitude of a patron: Henry was worthy of Leland; and the genius of the author was magnificent as that of the monarch who had created it.

Nor was the gratitude of Leland silent: he seems to have been in the habit of perpetuating his spontaneous emotions in elegant Latin verse. Our author has fancifully expressed his gratitude to the king:—

"Sooner," he says, "shall the seas float without their silent inhabitants; the thorny hedges cease to hide the birds; the oak to spread its boughs; and Flora to paint the meadows with flowers;

> "Quàm Rex dive, tuum labatur pectore nostro
> Nomen, quod studiis portus et aura meis."
>
> "Than thou, great King, my bosom cease to hail,
> Who o'er my studies breath'st a favouring gale."

Leland was, indeed, alive to the kindness of his royal patron; and among his numerous literary projects, was one of writing a history of all the palaces of Henry, in imitation of

Procopius, who described those of the Emperor Justinian. He had already delighted the royal ear in a beautiful effusion of fancy and antiquarianism, in his *Cygnea Cantio*, the Song of the Swans. The swan of Leland, melodiously floating down the Thames, from Oxford to Greenwich, chants, as she passes along, the ancient names and honours of the towns, the castles, and the villages.

Leland presented his "Strena, or a New Year's Gift," to the King.—It consists of an account of his studies; and sketches, with a fervid and vast imagination, his magnificent labour, which he had already inscribed with the title *De Antiquitate Britannica*, and which was to be divided into as many books as there were shires. All parts of this address of the King's Antiquary to the King, bear the stamp of his imagination and his taste. He opens his intention of improving, by the classical graces of composition, the rude labours of our ancestors; for,

"Except Truth be delicately clothed in purpure, her written verytees can scant find a reader."

Our old writers, he tells his sovereign, had, indeed,

"From time to time preserved the acts of your predecessors, and the fortunes of your realm, with great diligence, and no less faith; would to God with like eloquence!"

An exclamation of fine taste, when taste was yet a stranger in the country. And when he alludes to the knowledge of British affairs scattered among the Roman, as well as our own writers, his fervid fancy breaks forth with an image at once simple and sublime:

"I trust," says Leland, "so to open the window, that the light shall be seen so long, that is to say, by the space of a whole thousand years stopped up, and the old glory of your Britain to re-flourish through the world."*

* Leland, in his magnificent plan, included several curious departments. Jealous of the literary glory of the Italians, whom he compares to the Greeks for accounting all nations barbarous and unlettered, he had composed four books "De Viris Illustribus," on English Authors, to force them to acknowledge the illustrious genius, and the great men of Britain. Three books "De Nobilitate Britannica," were to be "as an ornament and a right comely garland."

And he pathetically concludes,

"Should I live to perform those things that are already begun, I trust that your realm shall so well be known, once painted with its native colours, that it shall give place to the glory of no other region."

The grandeur of this design was a constituent part of the genius of Leland, but not less, too, was that presaging melancholy which even here betrays itself, and even more frequently in his verses. Everything about Leland was marked by his own greatness; his country and his countrymen were ever present; and, by the excitement of his feelings, even his humbler pursuits were elevated into patriotism. Henry died the year after he received "The New Year's Gift." From that moment, in losing the greatest patron for the greatest work, Leland appears to have felt the staff which he had used to turn at pleasure for his stay, break in his hands.

He had new patrons to court, while engaged in labours for which a single life had been too short. The melancholy that cherishes genius may also destroy it. Leland, brooding over his voluminous labours, seemed to love and to dread them; sometimes to pursue them with rapture, and sometimes to shrink from them with despair. His generous temper had once shot forwards to posterity; but he now calms his struggling hopes and doubts, and confines his literary ambition to his own country and his own age.

"POSTERITATIS AMOR DUBIUS.

"Posteritatis amor mihi perblanditur, et ultro
Promittit libris secula multa meis.
At non tam facile est oculato imponere, nosco
Quàm non sim tali dignus honore frui.
Græcia magniloquos vates desiderat ipsa,
Roma suos etiam disperiise dolet.
Exemplis quum sim claris edoctus ab istis,
Quî sperem Musas vivere posse meas?
Certè mî sat erit præsenti scribere sæclo,
Auribus et patriæ complacuisse meæ."

IMITATED.

"Posterity, thy soothing love I feel,
That o'er my volumes many an age may steal:

But hard it is the well-clear'd eye to cheat
With honours undeserved, too fond deceit!
Greece, greatly eloquent, and full of fame,
Sighs for the want of many a perish'd name;
And Rome o'er her illustrious children mourns,
Their fame departing with their mouldering urns.
How can I hope, by such examples shown,
More than a transient day, a passing sun?
Enough for me to win the present age,
And please a brother with a brother's page."

By other verses, addressed to Cranmer, it would appear that Leland was experiencing anxieties to which he had not been accustomed,—and one may suspect, by the opening image of his "Supellex," that his pension was irregular, and that he began, as authors do in these hard cases, to value "the furniture" of his mind above that of his house.

"AD THOMAM CRANMERUM.

CANT. ARCHIEPISCOP.

"Est congesta mihi domi Supellex
Ingens, aurea, nobilis, venusta,
Quâ totus studeo Britanniarum
Vero reddere gloriam nitori.
Sed Fortuna meis noverca cœptis
Jam felicibus invidet maligna.
Quare, ne pereant brevi vel horâ
Multarum mihi noctium labores
Omnes, et patriæ simul decora
Ornamenta cadant," &c. &c.

IMITATED.

"The furnitures that fill my house,
The vast and beautiful disclose,
All noble, and the store is gold;
Our ancient glory here unroll'd.
But fortune checks my daring claim,
A step-mother severe to fame,
A smile malignantly she throws
Just at the story's prosperous close.
And thus must the unfinish'd tale,
And all my many vigils fail,
And must my country's honour fall;
In one brief hour must perish all?"

But, conscious of the greatness of his labours, he would obtain the favour of the Archbishop, by promising a share of his own fame—

"—— pretium sequetur amplum—
Sic nomen tibi litteræ elegantes
Rectè perpetuum dabunt, suosque
Partim vel titulos tibi receptos
Concedet memori Britannus ore:
Sic te posteritas amabit omnis,
Et famâ super æthera innotesaes."

IMITATED.

"But take the ample glorious meed,
To letter'd elegance decreed,
When Britain's mindful voice shall bend,
And with her own thy honours blend,
As she from thy kind hands receives
Her titles drawn on Glory's leaves,
And back reflects them on thy name,
Till time shall love thy mounting fame."

Thus was Leland, like the melancholic, withdrawn entirely into the world of his own ideas; his imagination delighting in reveries, while his industry was exhausting itself in labour. His manners were not free from haughtiness,—his meagre and expressive physiognomy indicates the melancholy and the majesty of his mind, it was not old age, but the premature wrinkles of those nightly labours he has himself recorded. All these characteristics are so strongly marked in the bust of Leland, that Lavater had triumphed had he studied it.*

Labour had been long felt as voluptuousness by Leland; and this is among the Calamities of Literature, and it is so with all those studies which deeply busy the intellect and the fancy. There is a poignant delight in study, often subversive of human happiness. Men of genius, from their ideal state, drop into the cold formalities of society, to encounter its evils, its disappointments, its neglect, and perhaps its persecutions. When such minds discover the world will only become a friend

* What reason is there to suppose with Granger that his bust, so admirably engraven by Grignion, is supposititious? Probably struck by the premature old age of a man who died in his fortieth year, he condemned it by its appearance; but not with the eye of the physiognomist.

on its own terms, then the cup of their wrath overflows; the learned grow morose, and the witty sarcastic; but more indelible emotions in a highly-excited imagination often produce those delusions, which Darwin calls hallucinations, and which sometimes terminate in mania. The haughtiness, the melancholy, and the aspiring genius of Leland, were tending to a disordered intellect. Incipient insanity is a mote floating in the understanding, escaping all observation, when the mind is capable of observing itself, but seems a constituent part of the mind itself when that is completely covered with its cloud.

Leland did not reach even the maturity of life, the period at which his stupendous works were to be executed. He was seized by frenzy. The causes of his insanity were never known. The Papists declared he went mad because he had embraced the new religion; his malicious rival Polydore Vergil, because he had promised what he could not perform; duller prosaists because his poetical turn had made him conceited. The grief and melancholy of a fine genius, and perhaps an irregular pension, his enemies have not noticed.

The ruins of Leland's mind were viewed in his library; volumes on volumes stupendously heaped together, and masses of notes scattered here and there; all the vestiges of his genius, and its distraction. His collections were seized on by honest and dishonest hands; many were treasured, but some were stolen. Hearne zealously arranged a series of volumes from the fragments; but the Britannia of Camden, the London of Stowe, and the Chronicles of Holinshed, are only a few of those public works whose waters silently welled from the spring of Leland's genius; and that nothing might be wanting to preserve some relic of that fine imagination which was always working in his poetic soul, his own description of his learned journey over the kingdom was a spark, which, falling into the inflammable mind of a poet, produced the singular and patriotic poem of the Polyolbion of Drayton. Thus the genius of Leland has come to us diffused through the variety of other men's; and what he intended to produce it has required many to perform.

A singular inscription, in which Leland speaks of himself, in the style he was accustomed to use, and which Weever

tells us was affixed to his monument, as he had heard by tradition, was probably a relic snatched from his general wreck —for it could not with propriety have been composed after his death.*

"Quantùm Rhenano debet Germania docto
Tantùm debebit terra Britanna mihi.
Ille suæ gentis ritus et nomina prisca
Æstivo fecit lucidiora die.
Ipse antiquarum rerum quoque magnus amator
Ornabo patriæ lumina clara meæ.
Quæ cum prodierint niveis inscripta tabellis,
Tum testes nostræ sedulitatis erunt.

IMITATED.

"What Germany to learn'd Rhenanus owes,
That for my Britain shall my toil unclose;
His volumes mark their customs, names, and climes,
And brighten, with a summer's light, old times.
I also, touch'd by the same love, will write,
To ornament my country's splendid light,
Which shall, inscribed on snowy tablets, be
Full many a witness of my indu try."

Another example of literary disappointment disordering the intellect, may be contemplated in the fate of the poet Collins.

Several interesting incidents may be supplied to Johnson's narrative of the short and obscure life of this poet, who, more than any other of our martyrs to the lyre, has thrown over all his images and his thoughts a tenderness of mind, and breathed a freshness over the pictures of poetry, which the mighty Milton has not exceeded, and the laborious Gray has not attained. But he immolated happiness, and at length reason, to his imagination! The incidents most interesting in the life of Collins would be those events which elude the ordinary biographer; that invisible train of emotions which were gradually passing in his mind; those passions which first moulded his genius, and which afterwards broke it! But who could record the vacillations of a poetic temper; its early hope, and its late despair; its wild gaiety, and its settled frenzy; but the poet himself? Yet Collins has left behind no memorial of the wanderings of his alienated mind, but the errors of his life!

* Ancient Funerall Monuments, p. 692.

At college he published his "Persian Eclogues," as they were first called, to which, when he thought they were not distinctly Persian, he gave the more general title of "Oriental." The publication was attended with no success; but the first misfortune a poet meets will rarely deter him from incurring more. He suddenly quitted the university, and has been censured for not having consulted his friends when he rashly resolved to live by the pen. But he had no friends! His father had died in embarrassed circumstances; and Collins was residing at the university on the stipend allowed him by his uncle, Colonel Martin, who was abroad. He was indignant at a repulse he met with at college; and alive to the name of author and poet, the ardent and simple youth imagined that a nobler field of action opened on him in the metropolis than was presented by the flat uniformity of a college life. To whatever spot the youthful poet flies, that spot seems Parnassus, as applause seems patronage. He hurried to town, and presented himself to the cousin, who paid his small allowance from his uncle, in a fashionable dress, with a feather in his hat. The graver gentleman did not succeed in his attempt at sending him back, with all the terror of his information, that Collins had not a single guinea of his own, and was dressed in a coat he could never pay for. The young bard turned from his obdurate cousin as "a dull fellow;" a usual phrase with him to describe those who did not think as he would have them.

That moment was now come, so much desired, and scarcely yet dreaded, which was to produce those effusions of fancy and learning, for which Collins had prepared himself by previous studies. About this time Johnson* has given a finer picture of the intellectual powers and the literary attainments of Collins, than in the life he afterwards composed. Collins was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages; "full of hopes and full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention." Such was the language of Johnson, when, warmed by his own imagination, he could write like

* In a letter to Joseph Warton.

Longinus; at that after-period, when amusing the austerity of critical discussion for the lives of poets, even in the coldness of his recollections, he describes Collins as "a man of extensive literature, and of vigorous faculties."

A chasm of several years remains to be filled. He was projecting works of labour, and creating productions of taste; and he has been reproached for irresolution, and even for indolence. Let us catch his feelings from the facts as they rise together, and learn whether Collins must endure censure, or excite sympathy.

When he was living loosely about town, he occasionally wrote many short poems in the house of a friend, who witnesses that he burned as rapidly as he composed. His odes were purchased by Millar, yet, though but a slight pamphlet, all the interest of that great bookseller could never introduce them into notice. Not an idle compliment is recorded to have been sent to the poet. When we now consider that among these odes was one the most popular in the language, with some the most exquisitely poetical, it reminds us of the difficulty a young writer without connexions experiences in obtaining the public ear; and of the languor of poetical connoisseurs who sometimes suffer poems, that have not yet grown up to authority, to be buried on the shelf. What the outraged feelings of the poet were, appeared when sometime afterwards he became rich enough to express them. Having obtained some fortune by the death of his uncle, he made good to the publisher the deficiency of the unsold odes, and, in his haughty resentment at the public taste, consigned the impression to the flames!

Who shall now paint the feverish and delicate feelings of a young poet such as Collins, who had twice addressed the public, and twice had been repulsed? He whose poetic temper Johnson has finely painted, at the happy moment when he felt its influence, as "delighting to rove through the meadows of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, and repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens!"

It cannot be doubted, and the recorded facts will demonstrate it, that the poetical disappointments of Collins were secretly preying on his spirit, and repressing his firmest exertions.

With a mind richly stored with literature, and a soul alive to the impulses of nature and study, he projected a "History of the Revival of Learning," and a translation of "Aristotle's Poetics," to be illustrated by a large commentary.

But "his great fault," says Johnson, "was his *irresolution;* or the frequent calls of *immediate necessity* broke his schemes, and suffered him to pursue no settled purpose." Collins was, however, not idle, though without application; for, when reproached with idleness by a friend, he showed instantly several sheets of his version of Aristotle, and many embryos of some lives he had engaged to compose for the Biographia Britannica; he never brought either to perfection! What then was this *irresolution* but the vacillations of a mind broken and confounded? He had exercised too constantly the highest faculties of fiction, and he had precipitated himself into the dreariness of real life. None but a poet can conceive, for none but a poet can experience, the secret wounds inflicted on a mind of romantic fancy and tenderness of emotion, which has staked its happiness on its imagination; for such neglect is felt as ordinary men would feel the sensation of being let down into a sepulchre, and buried alive. The mind of Tasso, a brother in fancy to Collins, became disordered by the opposition of the critics, but perpetual neglect injures it not less. The HOPE of the ancients was represented holding some flowers, the promise of the spring, or some spikes of corn, indicative of approaching harvest—but the HOPE of Collins had scattered its seed, and they remained buried in the earth.

The oblivion which covered our poet's works appeared to him eternal, as those works now seem to us immortal. He had created HOPE with deep and enthusiastic feeling:—

> "With eyes so fair—
> Whispering promised pleasure,
> And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail;
> And Hope, enchanted, smiled, and waived her golden hair!"

The few years Collins passed in the metropolis he was subsisting with or upon his friends; and, being a pleasing companion, he obtained many literary acquaintances. It was at this period that Johnson knew him, and thus describes

him:—"His appearance was decent, and his knowledge considerable; his views extensive, and his conversation elegant." He was a constant frequenter at the literary resorts of the Bedford and Slaughter's; and Armstrong, Hill, Garrick, and Foote, frequently consulted him on their pieces before they appeared in public. From his intimacy with Garrick he obtained a free admission into the green-room; and probably it was at this period, among his other projects, that he planned several tragedies, which, however, as Johnson observes, "he only planned." There is a feature in Collins's character which requires attention. He is represented as a man of cheerful dispositions; and it has been my study to detect only a melancholy which was preying on the very source of life itself. Collins was, indeed, born to charm his friends; for fancy and elegance were never absent from his susceptible mind, rich in its stores, and versatile in its emotions. He himself indicates his own character, in his address to "Home:"—

> "Go! nor, regardless while these numbers boast
> My short-lived bliss, forget my social name."

Johnson has told us of his cheerful dispositions; and one who knew him well observes, that "in the green-room he made diverting observations on the vanity and false consequence of that class of people, and his manner of relating them to his particular friends was extremely entertaining;" but the same friend acknowledges that "some letters which he received from Collins, though chiefly on business, have in them some flights which strongly mark his character, and for which reason I have preserved them." We cannot decide of the temper of a man viewed only in a circle of friends, who listen to the ebullitions of wit or fancy; the social warmth for a moment throws into forgetfulness his secret sorrow. The most melancholy man is frequently the most delightful companion, and peculiarly endowed with the talent of satirical playfulness and vivacity of humour.* But what was the true life of Col-

* Burton, the author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," offers a striking instance. Bishop Kennett, in his curious "Register and Chronicle," has preserved the following particulars of this author. "In an interval

lins, separated from its adventitious circumstances? It was a life of want, never chequered by hope, that was striving to elude its own observation by hurrying into some temporary dissipation. But the hours of melancholy and solitude were sure to return; these were marked on the dial of his life, and, when they struck, the gay and lively Collins, like one of his own enchanted beings, as surely relapsed into his natural shape. To the perpetual recollection of his poetical disappointments, are we to attribute this unsettled state of his mind, and the perplexity of his studies. To these he was perpetually reverting, which he showed when after a lapse of several years, he could not rest till he had burned his ill-fated odes. And what was the result of his literary life? He returned to his native city of Chichester in a state almost of nakedness, destitute, diseased, and wild in despair, to hide himself in the arms of a sister.

The cloud had long been gathering over his convulsed intellect; and the fortune he acquired on the death of his uncle served only for personal indulgences, which rather accelerated his disorder. There were, at times, some awful pauses in the alienation of his mind—but he had withdrawn it from study. It was in one of these intervals that Thomas Warton told Johnson that when he met Collins travelling, he took up a book the poet carried with him, from curiosity, to see what companion a man of letters had chosen—it was an English Testament. "I have but one book," said Collins, "but that is the best." This circumstance is recorded on his tomb.

of vapours *he would be extremely pleasant, and raise laughter in any company.* Yet I have heard, that nothing at last could make him laugh, but, going down to the Bridge-foot at Oxford, and hearing the bargemen scold and storm and swear at one another; at which he would set his hands to his sides, and laugh most profusely; yet in his chamber so mute and mopish, that he was suspected to be *felo de se.*" With what a fine strain of poetic feeling has a modern bard touched this subject!—

> "As a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow,
> While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
> So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,
> Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while."
>
> *Moore's Irish Melodies.*

"He join'd pure faith to strong poetic powers,
And in reviving reason's lucid hours,
Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
And rightly deem'd the book of God the best."

At Chichester, tradition has preserved some striking and affecting occurrences of his last days; he would haunt the aisles and cloisters of the cathedral, roving days and nights together, loving their

"Dim religious light."

And, when the choristers chanted their anthem, the listening and bewildered poet, carried out of himself by the solemn strains, and his own too susceptible imagination, moaned and shrieked, and awoke a sadness and a terror most affecting amid religious emotions; their friend, their kinsman, and their poet, was before them, an awful image of human misery and ruined genius!

This interesting circumstance is thus alluded to on his monument:—

"Ye walls that echoed to his frantic moan,
Guard the due record of this grateful stone:
Strangers to him, enamour'd of his lays,
This fond memorial of his talents raise."

A voluntary subscription raised the monument to Collins. The genius of Flaxman has thrown out on the eloquent marble all that fancy would consecrate; the tomb is itself a poem.

There Collins is represented as sitting in a reclining posture, during a lucid interval of his afflicting malady, with a calm and benign aspect, as if seeking refuge from his misfortunes in the consolations of the Gospel, which lie open before him, whilst his lyre, and "the Ode on the Passions," as a scroll, are thrown together neglected on the ground. Upon the pediment on the tablet are placed in relief two female figures of Love and Pity, entwined each in the arms of the other; the proper emblems of the genius of his poetry.

Langhorne, who gave an edition of Collins's poems with all the fervour of a votary, made an observation not perfectly correct:—"It is observable," he says, "that none of his

poems bear the marks of an amorous disposition; and that he is one of those few poets who have sailed to Delphi, without touching at Cythera. In the 'Ode to the Passions,' *Love* has been omitted." There, indeed, Love does not form an important personage; yet, at the close, *Love* makes his transient appearance with *Joy* and *Mirth*—"a gay fantastic rond."

> "And, amidst his frolic play,
> As if he would the charming air repay,
> Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings."

It is certain, however, that Collins considered the amatory passion as unfriendly to poetic originality; for he alludes to the whole race of the Provençal poets, by accusing them of only employing

> "Love, only love, her forceless numbers mean."

Collins affected to slight the urchin; for he himself had been once in love, and his wit has preserved the history of his passion; he was attached to a young lady who was born the day before him, and who seems not to have been very poetically tempered, for she did not return his ardour. On that occasion, he said "that he came into the world *a day after the fair*."

Langhorne composed two sonnets, which seem only preserved in the Monthly Review, in which he was a writer, and where he probably inserted them; they bear a particular reference to the misfortunes of our poet. In one he represents Wisdom, in the form of Addison, reclining in "the old and honoured shade of Magdalen," and thus addressing

> "The poor shade of Collins, wandering by;
> The tear stood trembling in his gentle eye,
> With modest grief reluctant, while he said—
> 'Sweet bard, belov'd by every muse in vain!
> With powr's, whose fineness wrought their own decay;
> Ah! wherefore, thoughtless didst thou yield the rein
> To fancy's will, and chase the meteor ray?
> Ah! why forget thy own Hyblæan strain,
> Peace rules the breast, where reason rules the day.'"

The last line is most happily applied; it is a verse by the unfortunate bard himself; which heightens the contrast with

his forlorn state! Langhorne has feelingly painted the fatal indulgences of such a character as Collins.

> "Of fancy's too prevailing power beware!
> Oft has she bright on life's fair morning shone;
> Oft seated Hope on Reason's sovereign throne.
> Then closed the scene in darkness and despair.
> Of all her gifts, of all her powers possest,
> Let not her flattery win thy youthful ear,
> Nor vow long faith to such a various guest,
> False at the last, tho' now perchance full dear;
> The casual lover with her charms is blest,
> But woe to them her magic bands that wear!"

The criticism of Johnson on the poetry of Collins, that "as men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure," might also have been furnished by the lumbering pen of old Dennis. But Collins from the poetical never *extorts* praise, for it is given *spontaneously;* he is much *more loved* than *esteemed*, for he does not give *little pleasure*. Johnson, too, describes "his lines as of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants." Even this verbal criticism, though it appeals to the eye, and not to the ear, is false criticism; since Collins is certainly the most musical of poets. How could that Lyrist be harsh in his diction, who almost draws tears from our eyes, while his melodious lines and picturing epithets are remembered by his readers? He is devoured with as much enthusiasm by one party as he is imperfectly relished by the other.

Johnson has given two characters of this poet; the one composed at a period when that great critic was still susceptible of the seductions of the imagination; but even in this portrait, though some features of the poet are impressively drawn, the likeness is incomplete, for there is not even a slight indication of the chief feature in Collins's genius, his tenderness and delicacy of emotion, and his fresh and picturesque creative strokes. Nature had denied to Johnson's robust intellect the perception of these poetic qualities. He was but a stately ox in the fields of Parnassus, not the animal of nature. Many years afterwards, during his poetical

biography, that long Lent of criticism, in which he mortified our poetical feelings by accommodating his to the populace of critics,—so faint were former recollections, and so imperfect were even those feelings which once he seemed to have possessed,—that he could then do nothing but write on Collins with much less warmth than he has written on Blackmore. Johnson is, indeed, the first of critics, when his powerful logic investigates objects submitted to reason; but great sense is not always combined with delicacy of taste; and there is in poetry a province which Aristotle himself may never have entered.

THE REWARDS OF ORIENTAL STUDENTS.

At a time when oriental studies were in their infancy in this country, Simon Ockley, animated by the illustrious example of Pococke, and the laborious diligence of Prideaux, devoted his life and his fortune to these novel researches, which necessarily involved both. With that enthusiasm which the ancient votary experienced, and with that patient suffering the modern martyr has endured, he pursued, till he accomplished, the useful object of his labours. He perhaps was the first who exhibited to us other heroes than those of Rome and Greece; sages as contemplative, and a people more magnificent even than the iron masters of the world. Among other oriental productions, his most considerable is "The History of the Saracens." The first volume appeared in 1708, and the second ten years afterwards. In the preface to the last volume, the oriental student pathetically counts over his sorrows, and triumphs over his disappointments; the most remarkable part is the date of the place from whence this preface was written—he triumphantly closes his labours in the confinement of Cambridge Castle for debt!

Ockley, lamenting his small proficiency in the Persian studies, resolves to attain them:—

"How often have I endeavoured to perfect myself in that

language, but my malignant and envious stars still frustrated my attempts; but they shall sooner alter their courses than extinguish my resolution of quenching that thirst, which the little I have had of it hath already excited."

And he states the deficiencies of his history with the most natural modesty:—

"Had I not been forced to snatch everything that I have, as it were, out of the fire, our Saracen history should have been ushered into the world after a different manner." He is fearful that something would be ascribed to his indolence or negligence, that "ought more justly to be attributed to the influence of inexorable necessity. Could I have been master of my own time and circumstances?"

Shame on those pretended patrons who, appointing "a professor of the oriental languages," counteract the purpose of the professorship by their utter neglect of the professor, whose stipend cannot keep him on the spot where only he ought to dwell. And Ockley complains also of that hypocritical curiosity which pretends to take an interest in things it cares little about; perpetually inquiring, as soon as a work is announced, when it is to come out. But these Pharisees of literature, who can only build sepulchres to ancient prophets, never believe in a living one. Some of these, Ockley met with on the publication of his first volume: they run it down as the strangest story they had ever heard; they had never met with such folks as the Arabians! "A reverend dignitary asked me, if, when I wrote that book, I had not lately been reading the history of Oliver Cromwell?" Such was the plaudit the oriental student received, and returned to grow pale over his MSS. But when Petis de la Croix, observes Ockley, was pursuing the same track of study, in the patronage of Louis XIV., he found books, leisure, and encouragement; and when the great Colbert desired him to compose the life of Genkis Chan, he considered a period of ten years not too much to be allowed the author. And then Ockley proceeds:—

"But my unhappy condition hath always been widely different from anything that could admit of such an exactness.

Fortune seems only to have given me a taste of it out of spite, on purpose that I might regret the loss of it."

He describes his two journeys to Oxford, for his first volume; but in his second matters fared worse with him:

"Either my domestic affairs were grown much worse, or I less able to bear them; or what is more probable, both."

Ingenuous confession! fruits of a life devoted in its struggles, to important literature! and we murmur when genius is irritable, and erudition is morose! But let us proceed with Ockley:

"I was forced to take the advantage of the slumber of my cares, that never slept when I was awake; and if they did not incessantly interrupt my studies, were sure to succeed them with no less constancy than night doth the day."

This is the cry of agony. He who reads this without sympathy, ought to reject these volumes as the idlest he ever read; and honour me with his contempt. The close of Ockley's preface shows a love-like tenderness for his studies; although he must quit life without bringing them to perfection, he opens his soul to posterity, and tells them, in the language of prophecy, that if they will bestow encouragement on our youth, the misfortunes he has described will be remedied. He, indeed, was aware that these students—

"Will hardly come in upon the prospect of finding leisure, in a prison, to transcribe those papers for the press which they have collected with indefatigable labour, and oftentimes at the expense of their rest, and all the other conveniences of life, for the service of the public."

Yet the exulting martyr of literature, at the moment he is fast bound to the stake, does not consider a prison so dreadful a reward for literary labours.—

"I can assure them, from my own experience, that I have enjoyed more true liberty, more happy leisure, and more solid repose in six months here, than in thrice the same number of years before. Evil is the condition of that historian who undertakes to write the lives of others, before he knows how to live himself. Yet I have no just reason to be angry with the world; I never stood in need of its assistance in my life, but I found it always very liberal of its advice; for which I am so much the more beholden to it, by how much the more

I did always in my judgment give the possession of wisdom the preference to that of riches."*

Poor Ockley, always a student, and rarely what is called a man of the world, once encountered a literary calamity which frequently occurs when an author finds himself among the vapid triflers and the polished cynics of the fashionable circle. Something like a patron he found in Harley, the Earl of Oxford, and once had the unlucky honour of dining at the table of my Lord Treasurer. It is probable that Ockley, from retired habits and severe studies, was not at all accomplished in the *suaviter in modo*, of which greater geniuses than Ockley have so surlily despaired. How he behaved I cannot narrate; probably he delivered himself with as great simplicity at the table of the Lord Treasurer, as on the wrong

* Dr. Edmund Castell offers a remarkable instance to illustrate our present investigation. He more than devoted his life to his "Lexicon Heptaglotton." It is not possible, if there are tears that are to be bestowed on the afflictions of learned men, to read his pathetic address to Charles II., and forbear them. He laments the seventeen years of incredible pains, during which he thought himself idle when he had not devoted sixteen or eighteen hours a day to this labour; that he had expended all his inheritance (it is said more than twelve thousand pounds): that it had broken his constitution, and left him blind as well as poor. When this invaluable Polyglott was published, the copies remained unsold in his hands; for the learned Castell had anticipated the curiosity and knowledge of the public by a full century. He had so completely devoted himself to Oriental studies, that they had a very remarkable consequence, for he had totally forgotten his own language, and could scarcely spell a single word. This appears in some of his English letters, preserved by Mr. Nichols in his valuable "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," vol. iv. Five hundred of these Lexicons, unsold at the time of his death, were placed, by Dr. Castell's niece, in a room so little regarded, that scarcely one complete copy escaped the rats, and "the whole load of learned rags sold only for seven pounds." The work at this moment would find purchasers, I believe, at forty or fifty pounds. —The learned Sale, who first gave the world a genuine version of the Koran, and who had so zealously laboured in forming that "Universal History" which was the pride of our country, pursued his studies through a life of want—and this great Orientalist, (I grieve to degrade the memoirs of a man of learning by such mortifications,) when he quitted his studies too often wanted a change of linen, and often wandered in the streets in search of some compassionate friend who would supply him with the meal of the day!

side of Cambridge Castle gate. The embarrassment this simplicity drew him into, is very fully stated in the following copious apology he addressed to the Earl of Oxford, which I have transcribed from the original; perhaps it may be a useful memorial to some men of letters as little polished as the learned Ockley:—

"*Cambridge, July* 15, 1714.

"My Lord,

"I was so struck with horror and amazement two days ago, that I cannot possibly express it. A friend of mine showed me a letter, part of the contents of which were, 'That Professor Ockley had given such extreme offence by some uncourtly answers to some gentlemen at my Lord Treasurer's table, that it would be in vain to make any further application to him.'

"My Lord, it is impossible for me to recollect, at this distance of time. All that I can say is this; that, as on the one side for a man to come to his patron's table with a design to affront either him or his friends, supposes him a perfect natural, a mere idiot; so on the other side it would be extreme severe, if a person whose education was far distant from the politeness of a court, should, upon the account of an unguarded expression, or some little inadvertency in his behaviour, suffer a capital sentence.

"Which is my case, if I have forfeited your Lordship's favour; which God forbid! That man is involved in double ruin that is not only forsaken by his friends, but, which is the unavoidable consequence, exposed to the malice and contempt, not only of enemies, but, what is still more grievous, of all sorts of fools.

"It is not the talent of every well-meaning man to converse with his superiors with due decorum; for, either when he reflects upon the vast distance of their station above his own, he is struck dumb and almost insensible; or else their condescension and courtly behaviour encourages him to be too familiar. To steer exactly between these two extremes requires not only a good intention, but presence of mind, and long custom.

"Another article in my friend's letter was, 'That some-

body had informed your Lordship, that I was a very sot.' When first I had the honour to be known to your Lordship, I could easily foresee that there would be persons enough that would envy me upon that account, and do what in them lay to traduce me. Let Haman enjoy never so much himself, it is all nothing, it does him no good, till poor Mordecai is hanged out of his way.

"But I never feared the being censured upon that account. Here in the University, I converse with none but persons of the most distinguished reputations both for learning and virtue, and receive from them daily as great marks of respect and esteem, which I should not have, if that imputation were true. It is most certain that I do indulge myself the freedom of drinking a cheerful cup, at proper seasons, among my friends; but no otherwise than is done by thousands of honest men who never forfeit their character by it. And whoever doth no more than so, deserves no more to be called a sot, than a man that eats a hearty meal would be willing to be called a glutton.

"As for those detractors, if I have but the least assurance of your Lordship's favour, I can very easily despise them. They are *Nati consumere fruges*. They need not trouble themselves about what other people do; for whatever they eat and drink, it is only robbing the poor. Resigning myself entirely to your Lordship's goodness and pardon, I conclude this necessary apology with like provocation, That *I would be content he should take my character from any person that had a good one of his own.*

"I am, with all submission,
"My Lord,
"Your Lordship's most obedient, &c.
"SIMON OCKLEY."

To the honour of the Earl of Oxford, this unlucky piece of awkwardness at table, in giving "uncourtly answers," did not interrupt his regard for the poor Oriental student; for several years afterwards the correspondence of Ockley was still acceptable to the Earl.

If the letters of the widows and children of many of our

eminent authors were collected, they would demonstrate the great fact, that the man who is a husband or a father ought not to be an author. They might weary with a monotonous cry, and usually would be dated from the goal or the garret. I have seen an original letter from the widow of Ockley to the Earl of Oxford, in which she lays before him the deplorable situation of her affairs; the debts of the Professor being beyond what his effects amounted to, the severity of the creditors would not even suffer the executor to make the best of his effects; the widow remained destitute of necessaries, incapable of assisting her children." *

Thus students have devoted their days to studies worthy of a student. They are public benefactors, yet find no friend in the public, who cannot yet appreciate their value—Ministers of state know it, though they have rarely protected them. Ockley, by letters I have seen, was frequently employed by Bolingbroke to translate letters from the Sovereign of Morocco to our court; yet all the debts for which he was imprisoned in Cambridge castle did not exceed two hundred pounds. The public interest is concerned in stimulating such enthusiasts; they are men who cannot be salaried, who cannot be created by letters patent; for they are men who infuse their soul into their studies, and breathe their fondness for them in their last agonies. Yet such are doomed to feel their life pass away like a painful dream!

Those who know the value of LIGHTFOOT's Hebraic studies, may be startled at the impediments which seem to have annihilated them. In the following effusion he confides his secret

* The following are extracts from Ockley's letters to the Earl of Oxford, which I copy from the originals:—

"*Cambridge Castle, May* 2, 1717.

"I am here in the prison for debt, which must needs be an unavoidable consequence of the distractions in my family. I enjoy more repose, indeed, here, than I have tasted these many years, but the circumstance of a family oblige me to go out as soon as I can."

"*Cambridge, Sept.* 7, 1717.

"I have at last found leisure in my confinement to finish my Saracen history, which I might have hoped for in vain in my perplexed circumstances."

agitation to his friend Buxtorf: "A few years since I prepared a little commentary on the first epistle to the Corinthians, in the same style and manner as I had done that on Matthew. But it laid by me two years or more, nor can I now publish it, but at my own charges and to my great damage, which I felt enough and too much in the edition of my book upon Mark. Some progress I have made in the gospel of St. Luke, but I can print nothing but at my own cost; thereupon I wholly give myself to reading, scarce thinking of writing more: for booksellers and printers have dulled my edge, who will print no book, especially Latin, unless they have an assured and considerable gain."

These writings and even the fragments have been justly appreciated by posterity, and a recent edition of all Lightfoot's works in many volumes have received honours which their despairing author never contemplated.

DANGER INCURRED BY GIVING THE RESULT OF LITERARY ENQUIRIES.

An author occupies a critical situation, for, while he is presenting the world with the result of his profound studies and his honest enquiries, it may prove pernicious to himself. By it he may incur the risk of offending the higher powers, and witnessing his own days embittered. Liable, by his moderation or his discoveries, by his scruples or his assertions, by his adherence to truth, or by the curiosity of his speculations, to be persecuted by two opposite parties, even when the accusations of the one necessarily nullify the other; such an author will be fortunate to be permitted to retire out of the circle of the bad passions; but he crushes in silence and voluntary obscurity all future efforts—and thus the nation lose a valued author.

This case is exemplified by the history of Dr. Cowel's curious work, "The Interpreter." The book itself is a treasure of our antiquities, illustrating our national manners. The author was devoted to his studies, and the merits of his

work recommended him to the Archbishop of Canterbury; in the Ecclesiastical Court he practised as a civilian, and became there eminent as a judge.

Cowel gave his work with all the modesty of true learning; for who knows his deficiencies so well in the subject on which he has written, as that author who knows most? It is delightful to listen to the simplicity and force with which an author in the reign of our first James opens himself without reserve.

"My true end is the advancement of knowledge; and therefore have I published this poor work, not only to impart the good thereof to those young ones that want it, but also to draw from the learned the supply of my defects. Whosoever will charge these my travels (labours) with many over-sights, he shall need no solemn pains to prove them. And upon the view taken of this book sithence the impression, I dare assure them that shall observe most faults therein, that I, by gleaning after him, will gather as many omitted by him, as he shall show committed by me. What a man saith well is not, however, to be rejected because he hath some errors; reprehend who will, in God's name, that is, with sweetness and without reproach. So shall he reap hearty thanks at my hands, and thus more soundly help in a few months, than I by tossing and tumbling my books at home, could possibly have done in many years."

This extract discovers Cowel's amiable character as an author. But he was not fated to receive "sweetness without reproach."

Cowel encountered an unrelenting enemy in Sir Edward Coke, the famous attorney-general of James I., the commentator of Littleton. As a man, his name ought to arouse our indignation, for his licentious tongue, his fierce brutality, and his cold and tasteless genius. He whose vileness could even ruffle the great spirit of Rawleigh, was the shameless persecutor of the learned Cowel.

Coke was the oracle of the common law, and Cowel of of the civil; but Cowel practised at Westminster Hall, as well as at Doctors' Commons. Coke turned away, with hatred, from an advocate who, with the skill of a great lawyer, exerted

all the courage. The attorney-general sought every occasion to degrade him, and, with peurile derision, attempted to fasten on Dr. Cowel the nickname of *Dr. Cowheel.* Coke, after having written in his Reports whatever he could against our author, with no effect, started a new project. Coke well knew his master's jealousy on the question of his prerogative; and he touched the King on that nerve. The attorney-general suggested to James that Cowel had discussed "too nicely the mysteries of his monarchy, in some points derogatory to the supreme power of his crown; asserting that the royal prerogative was in some cases limited." So subtly the serpent whispered to the feminine ear of a monarch, whom this vanity of royalty startled with all the fears of a woman. This suggestion had nearly occasioned the ruin of Cowel—it verged on treason; and if the conspiracy of Coke now failed, it was through the mediation of the archbishop, who influenced the King; but it succeeded in alienating the royal favour from Cowel.

When Coke found he could not hang Cowel for treason, it was only a small disappointment, for he had hopes to secure his prey by involving him in felony. As physicians in desperate cases sometimes reverse their mode of treatment, so Coke now operated on an opposite principle. He procured a party in the Commons to declare that Cowel was a betrayer of the rights and liberties of the people; that he had asserted the King was independent of Parliament, and that it was a favour to admit the consent of his subjects in giving of subsidies, &c.; and, in a word, that he drew his arguments from the Roman Imperial Code, and would make the laws and customs of Rome and Constantinople, those of London and York. Passages were wrested to Coke's design. The prefacer of Cowel's book very happily expresses himself when he says, "When a suspected book is brought to the torture, it often confesseth all, and more than it knows."

The Commons proceeded criminally against Cowel; and it is said his life was required, had not the King interposed. The author was imprisoned, and the book was burnt.

On this occasion was issued "a proclamation touching Dr. Cowel's book, called The Interpreter." It may be classed

among the most curious documents of our literary history. I do not hesitate to consider this proclamation as the composition of James I.

I will preserve some passages from this proclamation, not merely for their majestic composition, which may still be admired, and the singularity of the ideas, which may still be applied—but for the literary event to which it gave birth, in the appointment of a royal licenser for the press. Proclamations and burning of books are the strong efforts of a weak government, exciting rather than suppressing public attention.

"This later age and times of the world wherein we are fallen, is so much given to verbal profession, as well of religion as of all commendable royal virtues, but wanting the actions and deeds agreeable to so specious a profession; as it hath bred such an unsatiable curiosity in many men's spirits, and such an itching in the tongues and pens of most men, as nothing is left unsearched to the bottom, both in talking and writing. For, from the very highest mysteries in the Godhead, and the most inscrutable councils in the Trinity, to the very lowest pit of hell, and the confused actions of the devils there, there is nothing now unsearched into by the curiosity of men's brains. Men, not being contented with the knowledge of so much of the will of God as it hath pleased him to reveal; but they will needs sit with him in his most private closet, and become privy of his most inscrutable counsels. And, therefore, it is no wonder that men, in these our days, do not spare to wade in all the deepest mysteries that belong to the persons or state of kings and princes, that are gods upon earth; since we see (as we have already said) that they spare not God himself. And this license, which every talker or writer now assumeth to himself, is come to this abuse; that many Phormios will give counsel to Hannibal, and many men that never went of the compass of cloysters or colleges, will freely wade, by their writings, in the deepest mysteries of monarchy and politick government. Whereupon it cannot otherwise fall out, but that when men go out of their own element, and meddle with things above their capacity, themselves shall not only go astray and stumble in

darkness, but will mislead also divers others with themselves into many mistakings and errors; the proof whereof we have lately had by a book written by Dr. Cowel, called The Interpreter."

The royal reviewer then in a summary way shows how Cowel had, "by meddling in matters beyond his reach, fallen into many things to mistake and deceive himself." The book is therefore "prohibited; the buying, uttering or reading it;" and those "who have any copies are to deliver the same presently upon this publication to the Mayor of London," &c., and the proclamation concludes with instituting licensers of the press:—

"Because that there shall be better oversight of books of all sorts before they come to the press, we have resolved to make choice of commissioners, that shall look more narrowly into the nature of all those things that shall be put to the press, and from whom a more strict account shall be yielded unto us, than hath been used heretofore."

What were the feelings of our injured author, whose integrity was so firm, and whose love of study was so warm, when he reaped for his reward the displeasure of his sovereign, and the indignation of his countrymen—accused at once of contradictory crimes, he could not be a betrayer of the rights of the people, and at the same time limit the sovereign power. Cowel retreated to his college, and, like a wise man, abstained from the press; he pursued his private studies, while his inoffensive life was a comment on Coke's inhumanity, more honourable to Cowel than any of Coke's on Littleton.

Thus Cowel saw, in his own life, its richest labour thrown aside; and when the author and his adversary were no more, it became a treasure valued by posterity! It was printed in the reign of Charles I., under the administration of Cromwell, and again after the Restoration. It received the honour of a foreign edition. Its value is still permanent. Such is the history of a book, which occasioned the disgrace of its author, and embittered his life.

A similar calamity was the fate of honest Stowe, the Chronicler. After a long life of labour, and having exhausted his patrimony in the study of English Antiquities, from a

reverential love to his country, poor Stowe was ridiculed, calumniated, neglected, and persecuted. One cannot read without indignation and pity what Howes, his continuator, tells us in his dedication. Howes had observed that—

"No man would lend a helping hand to the late aged painful Chronicler, nor, after his death, prosecute his work. He applied himself to several persons of dignity and learning, whose names had got forth among the public as likely to be the continuators of Stowe; but every one persisted in denying this, and some imagined that their secret enemies had mentioned their names with a view of injuring them, by incurring the displeasure of their superiors, and risking their own quiet. One said, 'I will *not flatter*, to scandalize my posterity;' another, 'I cannot see how a man should spend his labour and money worse than in that which acquires no regard nor reward except *backbiting* and *detraction*.' One swore a great oath, and said, 'I thank God that I am not yet so mad to waste my time, spend two hundred pounds a year, trouble myself and all my friends, only to give assurance of endless reproach, loss of liberty, and bring all my days in question.'"

Unhappy authors! are such then the terrors which silence eloquence, and such the dangers which environ truth? Posterity has many discoveries to make, or many deceptions to endure! But we are treading on hot embers.

Such too was the fate of Reginald Scot, who, in an elaborate and curious volume,* if he could not stop the torrent of the popular superstitions of witchcraft, was the first, at least, to break and scatter the waves. It is a work which forms an epoch in the history of the human mind in our country; but the author had anticipated a very remote period of its en-

* "The Discoverie of Witchcraft, necessary to be known for the undeceiving of Judges, Justices, and Juries, and for the Preservation of Poor People. Third edition 1665." This was about the time that, according to Arnot's Scots Trials, the expenses of burning a witch amounted to ninety-two pounds fourteen shillings, Scots. The unfortunate old woman cost two trees, and employed two men to watch her closely for thirty days! One ought to recollect the past follies of humanity, to detect, perhaps, some existing ones.

largement. Scot, the apostle of humanity, and the legislator of reason, lived in retirement, yet persecuted by religious credulity and legal cruelty.

SELDEN, perhaps the most learned of our antiquaries, was often led, in his curious investigations, to disturb his own peace, by giving the result of his enquiries. James I. and the Court party were willing enough to extol his profound authorities and reasonings, on topics which did not interfere with their system of arbitrary power; but they harassed and persecuted the author whom they would at other times eagerly quote as their advocate. Selden, in his "History of Tithes," had alarmed the clergy by the intricacy of his enquiries. He pretends, however, to have only collected the opposite opinions of others, without delivering his own. The book was not only suppressed, but the great author was further disgraced by subscribing a gross recantation of all his learned investigations—and was compelled to receive in silence the insults of courtly scholars, who had the hardihood to accuse him of plagiarism, and other literary treasons, which more sensibly hurt Selden than the recantation extorted from his hand by "the Lords of the High Commission Court." James I. would not suffer him to reply to them. When the King desired Selden to show the right of the British Crown to the dominion of the sea, this learned author having made proper collections, Selden, angried at an imprisonment he had undergone, refused to publish the work. A great author like Selden degrades himself when any personal feeling, in literary disputes, places him on an equality with any King; the duty was to his country.—But Selden, alive to the call of rival genius, when Grotius published, in Holland, his *Mare liberum*, gave the world his *Mare clausum;* when Selden had to encounter Grotius, and to proclaim to the universe "the Sovereignty of the Seas," how contemptible to him appeared the mean persecutions of a crowned head, and how little his own meaner resentment!

To this subject the fate of Dr. HAWKESWORTH is somewhat allied. It is well known that this author, having distinguished himself by his pleasing compositions in the "Adventurer," was chosen to draw up the narrative of Cook's dis-

coveries in the South Seas. The pictures of a new world, the description of new manners in an original state of society, and the incidents arising from an adventure which could find no parallel in the annals of mankind, but under the solitary genius of Columbus—all these were conceived to offer a history, to which the moral and contemplative powers of Hawkesworth only were equal. Our author's fate, and that of his work, are known: he incurred all the danger of giving the result of his enquiries; he indulged his imagination till it burst into pruriency, and discussed moral theorems till he ceased to be moral. The shock it gave to the feelings of our author was fatal; and the error of a mind, intent on enquiries which, perhaps, he thought innocent, and which the world condemned as criminal, terminated in death itself. Hawkesworth was a vain man, and proud of having raised himself by his literary talents from his native obscurity: of no learning, he drew all his science from the Cyclopædia; and, I have heard, could not always have construed the Latin mottos of his own paper, which were furnished by Johnson; but his sensibility was abundant—and ere his work was given to the world he felt those tremblings, and those doubts, which anticipated his fate. That he was in a state of mental agony respecting the reception of his opinions, and some other parts of his work, will, I think, be discovered in the following letter, hitherto unpublished. It was addressed, with his MSS., to a Peer, to be examined before they were sent to the press—an occupation probably rather too serious for the noble critic:—

"*London, March* 2, 1761.

"I think myself happy to be permitted to put *my MSS. into your Lordship's hands*, because, though it increases my anxiety and my fears, yet it will at least secure me from what I should think *a far greater misfortune* than any other that can attend my performance, *the danger of addressing to the king any sentiment, allusion, or opinion*, that could make such an address *improper*.—I have now the honour to submit the *work* to your Lordship, with the dedication; from which the duty I owe to his Majesty, and, if I may be permitted to add

anything to that, the duty I owe to myself, have concurred to exclude the servile, extravagant, and indiscriminate adulation, which has so often disgraced alike those by whom it has been given and received. I remain," &c. &c.

This elegant epistle justly describes that delicacy in style which has been so rarely practised by an indiscriminate dedicator; and it not less feelingly touches on that "far greater misfortune than any other," which finally overwhelmed the fortitude and intellect of this unhappy author!

A NATIONAL WORK WHICH COULD FIND NO PATRONAGE.

The author who is nŏw before us is De Lolme!

I shall consider as an English author that foreigner, who flew to our country as the asylum of Europe, who composed a noble work on our Constitution, and, having imbibed its spirit, acquired even the language of a free country.

I do not know an example in our literary history that so loudly accuses our tardy and phlegmatic feeling respecting authors, as the treatment De Lolme experienced in this country. His book on our Constitution still enters into the studies of an English patriot, and is not the worse for flattering and elevating the imagination, painting everything beautiful, to encourage our love as well as our reverence for the most perfect system of governments. It was a noble as well as ingenious effort in a foreigner—it claimed national attention—but could not obtain even individual patronage. The fact is mortifying to record, that the author who wanted every aid, received less encouragement than if he had solicited subscriptions for a raving novel, or an idle poem. De Lolme was compelled to traffic with booksellers for this work; and, as he was a theoretical rather than a practical politician, he was a bad trader, and acquired the smallest remuneration. He lived, in the country to which he had rendered a national ser-

vice, in extreme obscurity and decay; and the walls of the Fleet too often enclosed the English Montesquieu. He never appears to have received a solitary attention,* and became so disgusted with authorship, that he preferred silently to endure its poverty rather than its other vexations. He ceased almost to write. Of De Lolme I have heard little recorded but his high-mindedness; a strong sense that he stood degraded beneath that rank in society which his book entitled him to enjoy. The cloud of poverty that covered him only veiled without concealing its object; with the manners and dress of a decayed gentleman, he still showed the few who met him that he cherished a spirit perpetually at variance with the adversity of his circumstances.

Our author, in a narrative prefixed to his work, is the proud historian of his own injured feelings; he smiled in bitterness on his contemporaries, confident it was a tale reserved for posterity.

After having written the work whose systematic principles refuted those political notions which prevailed at the era of the American revolution,—and whose truth has been so fatally demonstrated in our own times, in two great revolutions, which have shown all the defects and all the mischief of nations rushing into a state of freedom before they are worthy of it,—the author candidly acknowledges he counted on some sort of encouragement, and little expected to find the mere publication had drawn him into great inconvenience.

"When my enlarged English edition was ready for the press, had I acquainted ministers that I was preparing to boil my tea-kettle with it, for want of being able to afford the expenses of printing it;" ministers, it seems, would not have considered that he was lighting his fire with "myrrh, and cassia, and precious ointment."

In the want of encouragement from great men, and even from booksellers, De Lolme had recourse to a subscription; and his account of the manner he was received, and the in-

* Except from the hand of literary charity; he was more than once relieved by the Literary Fund. Such are the authors only whom it is wise to patronize.

dignities he endured, all which are narrated with great simplicity, show that whatever his knowledge of our Constitution might be, "his knowledge of the country was, at that time. very incomplete." At length, when he shared the profits of his work with the booksellers, they were "but scanty and slow." After all, our author sarcastically congratulates himself, that he—

"Was allowed to carry on the above business of selling my book, without any objection being formed against me, from my not having served a regular apprenticeship, and without being molested by the inquisition."

And further he adds—

"Several authors have chosen to relate, in writings published after death, the personal advantages by which their performances had been followed; as for me, I have thought otherwise—and I will see it printed while I am yet living."

This, indeed, is the language of irritation! and De Lolme degrades himself in the loudness of his complaint. But if the philosopher lost his temper, that misfortune will not take away the dishonour of the occasion that produced it. The country's shame is not lessened because the author who had raised its glory throughout Europe, and instructed the nation in its best lesson, grew indignant at the ingratitude of his pupil. De Lolme ought not to have congratulated himself that he had been allowed the liberty of the press unharassed by an inquisition—this sarcasm is senseless! or his book is a mere fiction!

THE MISERIES OF SUCCESSFUL AUTHORS.

Hume is an author so celebrated, a philosopher so serene, and a man so extremely amiable, if not fortunate, that we may be surprised to meet his name inscribed in a catalogue of literary calamities. Look into his literary life, and you will discover that the greater portion was mortified and angried; and that the stoic so lost his temper, that had not circumstances intervened which did not depend on himself, Hume had abandoned his country and changed his name!

"The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity." His "Treatise of Human Nature" fell dead-born from the press. It was cast anew with another title, and was at first little more successful. The following letter to Des Maiseaux, which I believe is now first published, gives us the feelings of the youthful and modest philosopher:—

"*David Hume to Des Maiseaux.*

"SIR,

"Whenever you see my name, you'll readily imagine the subject of my letter. A young author can scarce forbear speaking of his performance to all the world; but when he meets with one that is a good judge, and whose instruction and advice he depends on, there ought some indulgence to be given him. You were so good as to promise me, that if you could find leisure from your other occupations, you would look over my system of philosophy, and at the same time ask the opinion of such of your acquaintance as you thought proper judges. Have you found it sufficiently intelligible? Does it appear true to you? Do the style and language seem tolerable? These three questions comprehend everything; and I beg of you to answer them with the utmost freedom and sincerity. I know 'tis a custom to flatter Poets on their performances, but I hope Philosophers may be exempted; and the more so that their cases are by no means alike: when we do not approve of any thing in a Poet we commonly can give no reason for our dislikes but our particular taste; which not being convincing, we think it better to conceal our sentiments altogether. But every error in Philosophy can be distinctly markt and proved to be such; and this is a favour I flatter myself you'll indulge me in with regard to the performance I put into your hands. I am, indeed, afraid, that it would be too great a trouble for you to mark all the Errors you have observed: I shall only insist upon being informed of the most material of them, and you may assure yourself will consider it as a singular favour.—I am, with great esteem,

"Sir, your most obedient and most
humble servant,

"*Aprile* 6, 1739. "DAVID HUME.

"Please direct to me at Ninewells, near Berwick upon Tweed."

Hume's own favourite "Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals" came unnoticed and unobserved in the world. When he published the first portion of his "History," which made even Hume himself sanguine in his expectations,—he tells his own tale:—

"I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and, as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment! All classes of men and readers united in their rage against him who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford." "What was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion, and in a twelvemonth not more than forty-five copies were sold."

Even Hume, a stoic hitherto in his literary character, was struck down, and dismayed—he lost all courage to proceed—and, had the war not prevented him, "he had resolved to change his name, and never more to have returned to his native country."

But an author, though born to suffer martyrdom, does not always expire; he may be flayed like St. Bartholomew, and yet he can breathe without a skin; stoned, like St. Stephen, and yet write on with a broken head; and he has been even known to survive the flames, notwithstanding the most precious part of an author, which is obviously his book, has been burnt in an *auto da fe*. Hume once more tried the press in "The Natural History of Religion." It proved but another martyrdom! Still was the *fall* (as he terms it) of the first volume of his History haunting his nervous imagination, when he found himself yet strong enough to hold a pen in his hand, and ventured to produce a second, which "helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother." But the third part, containing the reign of Elizabeth, was particularly obnoxious, and he was doubtful whether he was again to be led to the stake. But Hume, a little hardened by a little success, grew, to use his

own words, "callous against the impressions of public folly," and completed his History, which was now received "with tolerable, and but tolerable, success."

At length, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, our author began, a year or two before he died, as he writes, to see "many *symptoms* of my literary reputation, breaking out *at last* with additional lustre, though I know that I can have but few years to enjoy it." What a provoking consolation for a philosopher, who, according to the result of his own system, was close upon a state of annihilation!

To Hume, let us add the illustrious name of DRYDEN.

It was after preparing a second edition of Virgil, that the great Dryden, who had lived, and was to die in harness, found himself still obliged to seek for daily bread. Scarcely relieved from one heavy task, he was compelled to hasten to another; and his efforts were now stimulated by a domestic feeling, the expected return of his son in ill health from Rome. In a letter to his bookseller he pathetically writes, "if it please God that *I must die of over-study*, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his." It was on this occasion, on the verge of his seventieth year, as he describes himself in the dedication of his Virgil, that, "worn out with study, and oppressed with fortune," he contracted to supply the bookseller with 10,000 verses at sixpence a line!

What was his entire dramatic life, but a series of vexation and hostility, from his first play to his last? On those very boards whence Dryden was to have derived the means of his existence and his fame, he saw his foibles aggravated, and his morals aspersed. Overwhelmed by the keen ridicule of Buckingham, and maliciously mortified by the triumph which Settle, his meanest rival, was allowed to obtain over him—and doomed still to encounter the cool malignant eye of Langbaine, who read poetry only to detect plagiarism. Contemporary genius is inspected with too much familiarity to be felt with reverence; and the angry prefaces of Dryden only excited the little revenge of the wits. How could such sympathize with injured, but with lofty feelings? They spread two reports of him, which may not be true, but which hurt him with the public. It was said that, being jealous of the success

of Creech, for his version of Lucretius, he advised him to attempt Horace, in which Dryden knew he would fail—and a contemporary haunter of the theatre, in a curious letter* on "The Winter Diversions," says of Congreve's angry preface to the "Double Dealer," that—

"The critics were severe upon this play, which gave the author occasion to lash them in his epistle dedicatory—so that 'tis generally thought *he has done his business, and lost himself;* a thing he owes to Mr. Dryden's *treacherous friendship*, who, being *jealous of the applause* he had got by his 'Old Bachelor,' *deluded him* into a foolish imitation of his own way of writing angry prefaces."

This lively critic is still more vivacious on the great Dryden, who had then produced his "Love Triumphant," which, the critic says,

"Was damned by the universal cry of the town, *nemine contradicente* but the *conceited poet*. He says in his prologue, that 'this is the last the town must expect from him:' he had done himself a kindness had he taken his leave before." He then describes the success of Southerne's "Fatal Marriage, or the innocent Adultery;" and concludes, "This kind usage will encourage desponding minor poets, and *vex huffing Dryden and Congreve to madness.*"

I have quoted thus much of this letter, that we may have before us a true image of those feelings which contemporaries entertain of the greater geniuses of their age; how they seek to level them, and in what manner men of genius are doomed to be treated—slighted, starved, and abused. Dryden and Congreve! the one the finest genius, the other the most exquisite wit of our nation, are to be *vexed to madness!*—their failures are not to excite sympathy, but contempt or ridicule! How the feelings and the language of contemporaries differ from that of posterity! And yet let *us* not exult in our purer and more dignified feelings—*we* are, indeed, the *posterity* of Dryden and Congreve; but we are the *contemporaries* of others

* A letter found among the papers of the late Mr. Windham, which Mr. Malone has preserved.

who must patiently hope for better treatment from our sons than they have received from the fathers.

Dryden was no master of the pathetic, yet never were compositions more pathetic than the Prefaces this great man has transmitted to posterity! Opening all the feelings of his heart, we live among his domestic sorrows. Johnson censures Dryden for saying *he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen.** We have just seen that Hume went farther, and sighed to fly to a retreat beyond that country which knew not to reward genius.—What, if Dryden felt the dignity of that character be supported, dare we blame his frankness? If the age be ungenerous, shall contemporaries escape the scourge of the great author, who feels he is addressing another age more favourable to him?

Johnson, too, notices his "Self-commendation; his diligence in reminding the world of his merits, and expressing, with very little scruple, his high opinion of his own powers." Dryden shall answer in his own words; with all the simplicity of Montaigne, he expresses himself with the dignity that would have become Milton or Gray:—

"It is a vanity common to all writers to overvalue their own productions; and it is better for me to own this failing in myself, than the world to do it for me. *For what other reason have I spent my life in such an unprofitable study? Why am I grown old in seeking so barren a reward as fame?* The same parts and application which have made me a poet, might have raised me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning, and less honesty, than myself."

How feelingly Whitehead paints the situation of Dryden in his old age:—

> "Yet lives the man, how wild soe'er his aim,
> Would madly barter fortune's smiles for fame?
> Well pleas'd to shine, through each recording page,
> The hapless Dryden of a shameless age!

* There is an affecting *remonstrance* of Dryden to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, on the state of his poverty and neglect—in which is this remarkable passage:—"It is enough for one age to have *neglected* Mr. Cowley, and *starved* Mr. Butler."

"Ill-fated bard! where'er thy name appears,
The weeping verse a sad memento bears;
Ah! what avail'd the enormous blaze between
Thy dawn of glory and thy closing scene!
When sinking nature asks our kind repairs,
Unstrung the nerves, and silver'd o'er the hairs;
When stay'd reflection came uncall'd at last,
And gray experience counts each folly past!"

Mickle's version of the Lusiad offers an affecting instance of the melancholy fears which often accompany the progress of works of magnitude, undertaken by men of genius. Five years he had buried himself in a farm-house, devoted to the solitary labour; and he closes his preface with the fragment of a poem, whose stanzas have perpetuated all the tremblings and the emotions, whose unhappy influence the author had experienced through the long work. Thus pathetically he addresses the Muse:—

"—Well thy meed repays thy worthless toil;
Upon thy houseless head pale want descends
In bitter shower: and taunting Scorn still rends
And wakes thee trembling from thy golden dream:
In vetchy bed, or loathly dungeon ends
Thy idled life——"

And when, at length, the great and anxious labour was completed, the author was still more unhappy than under the former influence of his foreboding terrors. The work is dedicated to the Duke of Buccleugh. Whether his Grace had been prejudiced against the poetical labour by Adam Smith, who had as little comprehension of the nature of poetry as becomes a political economist, or from whatever cause, after possessing it for six weeks the Duke had never condescended to open the volume. It is to the honour of Mickle that the Dedication is a simple, respectful inscription, in which the poet had not compromised his dignity,—and that in the second edition he had the magnanimity not to withdraw the dedication to this statue-like patron. Neither was the critical reception of this splendid labour of five devoted years grateful to the sensibility of the author: he writes to a friend—

"Though my work is well received at Oxford, I will hon-

estly own to you, some things have hurt me. A few grammatical slips in the introduction have been mentioned; and some things in the notes about Virgil, Milton, and Homer, have been called the arrogance of criticism. But the greatest offence of all is, what I say of blank verse."

He was, indeed, after this great work was given to the public, as unhappy as at any preceding period of his life; and Mickle too, like Hume and Dryden, could feel a wish to forsake his native land! Hes till found his "head houseless;" and "the vetchy bed" and "loathly dungeon" still haunted his dreams. "To write for the booksellers is what I never will do," exclaimed this man of genius, though struck by poverty. He projected an edition of his own poems by subscription.

"Desirous of giving an edition of my works, in which I shall bestow the utmost attention, which, perhaps, will be my final farewell to that blighted spot (worse than the most bleak mountains of Scotland) yclept Parnassus; after this labour is finished, if Governor Johnstone cannot or does not help me to a little independence, *I will certainly bid adieu to Europe, to unhappy suspense, and perhaps also to the chagrin of soul which I feel to accompany it.*"

Such was the language which cannot now be read without exciting our sympathy for the author of the version of an epic, which, after a solemn devotion of no small portion of the most valuable years of life, had been presented to the world, with not sufficient remuneration or notice of the author, to create even hope in the sanguine temperament of a poet. Mickle was more honoured at Lisbon than in his own country. So imperceptible are the gradations of public favour to the feelings of genius, and so vast an interval separates that author, who does not immediately address the tastes or the fashions of his age, from the reward or the enjoyment of his studies.

We cannot account, among the lesser calamities of literature, that of a man of genius, who, dedicating his days to the composition of a voluminous and national work, when that labour is accomplished, finds, on its publication, the hope of fame, and perhaps other hopes as necessary to reward past toil, and open to future enterprize, all annihilated. Yet this work neglected, or not relished, perhaps even the sport of

witlings, afterwards is placed among the treasures of our language, when the author is no more! but what is posthumous gratitude, could it reach even the ear of an angel?

The calamity is unavoidable; but this circumstance does not lessen it. New works must for a time be submitted to popular favour; but posterity is the inheritance of genius.

The man of genius, however, who has composed this great work, calculates his vigils, is best acquainted with its merits, and is not without an anticipation of the future feeling of his country; he

"But weeps the more, because he weeps in vain."

Such is the fate which has awaited many great works; and the heart of genius has died away on its own labours. I need not go so far back as the Elizabethan age to illustrate a calamity which will excite the sympathy of every man of letters; but the great work of a man of no ordinary genius presents itself on this occasion.

This great work is "The Polyolbion" of MICHAEL DRAYTON; a poem unrivalled for its magnitude and its character. The genealogy of poetry is always suspicious; yet I think it owed its birth to Leland's magnificent view of his intended work on Britain, and was probably nourished by the "Britannia" of Camden, who inherited the mighty industry, without the poetical spirit, of Leland; Drayton embraced both. This singular combination of topographical erudition and poetical fancy, constitutes a national work—a union that some may conceive not fortunate, no more than "the slow length" of its Alexandrine metre, for the purposes of mere delight. Yet what theme can be more elevating than a bard chanting to his "Father-land," as the Hollanders called their country? Our tales of ancient glory, our worthies who must not die, our towns, our rivers, and our mountains, all glancing before the picturesque eye of the naturalist and the poet! It is, indeed, a labour of Hercules; but it was not unaccompanied by the lyre of Apollo.

This national work was ill received; and the great author dejected, never pardoned his contemporaries, and even lost his temper. Drayton and his poetical friends beheld indig-

nantly the trifles of the hour overpowering the neglected Polyolbion.

One poet tells us that

> " ——————————— they prefer
> The fawning lines of every pamphleter."
>
> GEO. WITHERS.

And a contemporary records the utter neglect of this great poet:

> " Why lives Drayton when the times refuse
> Both means to live, and matter for a muse,
> Only without excuse to leave us quite,
> And tell us, durst we act, he durst to write."
>
> W. BROWNE.

Drayton published his Polyolbion first in eighteen parts; and the second portion afterwards. In this interval we have a letter to Drummond, dated in 1619:—

" I thank you, my dear sweet Drummond, for your good opinion of Polyolbion. I have done twelve books more, that is, from the 18th book, which was Kent, (if you note it,) all the east parts and north to the river of Tweed; *but it lieth by me, for the booksellers and I are in terms;* they are a company of base knaves, whom I scorn and kick at."

The vengeance of the poet had been more justly wreaked on the buyers of books, than on the sellers, who, though knavery has a strong connection with trade, yet, were they knaves, they would be true to their own interests. Far from impeding a successful author, booksellers are apt to hurry his labours; for they prefer the crude to the mature fruit, whenever the public taste can be appeased even by an unripened dessert.

These " knaves," however, seem to have succeeded in forcing poor Drayton to observe an abstinence from the press, which must have convulsed all the feelings of authorship. The second part was not published till three years after this letter was written; and then without maps. Its preface is remarkable enough; it is pathetic, till Drayton loses the dignity of genius in its asperity. It is inscribed, in no good humour—

"To any that will read it!

"When I first undertook this poem, or, as some have pleased to term it, this Herculean labour, I was by some virtuous friends persuaded that I should receive much comfort and encouragement; and for these reasons: First, it was a new clear way, never before gone by any; that it contained all the delicacies, delights, and rarities of this renowned isle, interwoven with the histories of the Britains, Saxons, Normans, and the later English. And further, that there is scarcely any of the nobility or gentry of this land, but that he is some way or other interested therein.

"But it hath fallen out otherwise; for instead of that comfort which my noble friends proposed as my due, I have met with barbarous ignorance and base detraction; such a cloud hath the devil drawn over the world's judgment. Some of the stationers that had the selling of the first part of this poem, because *it went not so fast away in the selling* as some of their beastly and abominable trash, (a shame both to our language and our nation) have despightfully left out the epistles to the readers, and so have cousened the buyers with imperfected books, which those that have undertaken the second part have been forced to amend in the first, for *the small number that are yet remaining in their hands.*

"And some of our outlandish, unnatural English (I know not how otherwise to express them) stick not to say that there is nothing in this island worthy studying for, and take a great pride to be ignorant in anything thereof. As for these cattle, *odi profanum vulgus, et arceo;* of which I account them, be they never so great."

Yet as a true poet, whose impulse, like fate, overturns all opposition, Drayton is not to be thrown out of his avocation; but intrepidly closes by promising "they shall not deter me from going on with Scotland, if means and time do not hinder me to perform as much as I have promised in my first song." Who could have imagined that such bitterness of style, and such angry emotions, could have been raised in the breast of a poet of pastoral elegance and fancy?

> "Whose bounding muse o'er ev'ry mountain rode,
> And every river warbled as it flow'd."—KIRKPATRICK.

It is melancholy to reflect, that some of the greatest works in our language have involved their authors in distress and anxiety; and that many have gone down to their grave insensible of that glory which soon covered it.

THE ILLUSIONS OF WRITERS IN VERSE.

Who would, with the awful severity of Plato, banish poets from the republic? But it may be desirable that the republic should not be banished from poets, which it seems to be when an inordinate passion for writing verses drives them from every active pursuit. There is no greater enemy to domestic quiet than a confirmed versifier; yet are most of them much to be pitied: it is the *mediocre* critics they first meet with, who are the real origin of a populace of *mediocre* poets. A young writer of verses is sure to get flattered by those who affect to admire what they do not even understand, and by those who, because they understand, imagine they are likewise endowed with delicacy of taste and a critical judgment. What sacrifices of social enjoyments, and all the business of life, are lavished with a prodigal's ruin in an employment which will be usually discovered to be a source of early anxiety, and of late disappointment!* I say nothing of the ridicule in which it involves some wretched Mævius, but of the

* An elegant poet of our times alludes, with due feeling, to these personal sacrifices. Addressing Poetry, he exclaims—

> "In devotion to thy heavenly charms,
> I clasp'd thy altar with my infant arms;
> For thee neglected the wide field of wealth,
> The toils of interest, and the sports of health."

How often may we lament that poets are too apt "to clasp the altar with infant arms." Goldsmith was near forty when he published his popular poems—and the greater number of the most valued poems were produced in mature life. When the poet begins in "Infancy," he too often contracts a habit of writing verses, and sometimes, in all his life, never reaches poetry.

misery which falls so heavily on him, and is often entailed on his generation. Whitehead has versified an admirable reflection of Pope's, in the preface to his works:—

> "For wanting wit be totally undone,
> And barr'd all arts, for having fail'd in one."

The great mind of BLACKSTONE never showed him more a poet than when he took, not without affection, "a farewell of the Muse," on his being called to the bar. DRUMMOND, of Hawthornden, quitted the bar from his love of poetry; yet he seems to have lamented slightly the profession which his father wished him to pursue. He perceives his error, he feels even contrition, but still cherishes it: no man, not in his senses, ever had a more lucid interval:—

> "I changed countries, new delights to find;
> But ah! for pleasure I did find new pain;
> Enchanting pleasure so did reason blind,
> That father's love and words I scorn'd as vain.
> I know that all the Muses' heavenly lays,
> With toil of spirit which are so dearly bought,
> As idle sounds of few or none are sought,
> That there is nothing lighter than vain praise;
> Know what I list, this all cannot me move,
> But that, alas! I both must write and love!"

Thus, like all poets, who, as Goldsmith observes, "are fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future," he talks like a man of sense, and acts like a fool.

This wonderful susceptibility of praise, to which poets seem more liable than any other class of authors, is indeed their common food; and they could not keep life in them without this nourishment. NAT. LEE, a true poet in all the excesses of poetical feelings—for he was in such raptures at times as to lose his senses—expresses himself in very energetic language on the effects of the praise necessary for poets.

"Praise," says Lee, "is the greatest encouragement we chameleons can pretend to, or rather the manna that keeps soul and body together; we devour it as if it were angels' food, and vainly think we grow immortal. There is nothing transports a poet, next to love, like commending in the right place."

This, no doubt, is a rare enjoyment, and serves to strengthen his illusions. But the same fervid genius elsewhere confesses, when reproached for his ungoverned fancy, that it brings with itself its own punishment:—

"I cannot be," says this great and unfortunate poet, "so ridiculous a creature to any man as I am to myself; for who should know the house so well as the good man at home? who, when his neighbour comes to see him, still sets the best rooms to view; and, if he be not a wilful ass, keeps the rubbish and lumber in some dark hole, where nobody comes but himself, to mortify at melancholy hours."

Study the admirable preface of POPE, composed at that matured period of life when the fever of fame had passed away, and experience had corrected fancy. It is a calm statement between authors and readers; there is no imagination that colours by a single metaphor, or conceals the real feeling which moved the author on that solemn occasion, of collecting his works for the last time. It is on a full review of the past that this great poet delivers this remarkable sentence:—

"*I believe, if any one, early in his life, should contemplate the dangerous fate of* AUTHORS, *he would scarce be of their number on any consideration.* The life of a wit is a warfare upon earth; and to pretend to serve the learned world in any way, one must have the constancy of a martyr, and a resolution to suffer for its sake."

All this is so true in literary history, that he who affects to suspect the sincerity of Pope's declaration, may flatter his sagacity, but will do no credit to his knowledge.

If thus great poets pour their lamentations for having devoted themselves to their art, some sympathy is due to the querulousness of a numerous race of *provincial bards*, whose situation is ever at variance with their feelings. These usually form exaggerated conceptions of their own genius, from the habit of comparing themselves with their contracted circle. Restless, with a desire of poetical celebrity, their heated imagination views in the metropolis that fame and fortune denied them in their native town; there they become half-hermits and half-philosophers, darting epigrams which provoke hatred, or pouring elegies, descriptive of their feel-

ings, which move derision: their neighbours find it much easier to ascertain their foibles, than comprehend their genius; and both parties live in a state of mutual persecution. Such, among many, was the fate of the poet HERRICK; his vein was pastoral, and he lived in the elysium of the west, which, however, he describes by the sullen epithet, "Dull Devonshire," where "he is still sad." Strange that such a poet should have resided near twenty years in one of our most beautiful counties in a very discontented humour. When he quitted his village of "Deanbourne," the petulant poet left behind him a severe "farewell," which was found still preserved in the parish, after a lapse of more than a century. Local satire has been often preserved by the very objects it is directed against, sometimes from the charm of the wit itself, and sometimes from the covert malice of attacking our neighbours. Thus he addresses "Deanbourne, a rude river in Devonshire, by which, sometime, he lived:—"

> "Dean-bourn, farewell!
> Thy rockie bottom that doth tear thy streams,
> And makes them frantic, e'en to all extremes.
> Rockie thou art, and rockie we discover
> Thy men—
> O men! O manners!—
> O people currish, churlish as their seas—"

He rejoices he leaves them, never to return till "rocks shall turn to rivers." When he arrives in London,

> "From the dull confines of the drooping west,
> To see the day-spring from the pregnant east,"

he, "ravished in spirit," exclaims, on a view of the metropolis,

> "O place! O people! manners form'd to please
> All nations, customs, kindreds, languages!"

But he fervently entreats not to be banished again:

> "For, rather than I'll to the west return,
> I'll beg of thee first, here to have mine urn."

The Devonians were avenged: for the satirist of the *English Arcadia* was condemned again to reside by "its rockie side," among "its rockie men."

Such has been the usual chaunt of provincial poets; and, if the "silky-soft Favonian gales" of Devon, with its "Worthies," could not escape the anger of such a poet as Herrick, what county may hope to be saved from the invective of querulous and dissatisfied poets?

In this calamity of authors I will show that a great poet felicitated himself that poetry was not the business of his life; and afterwards I will bring forward an evidence that the immoderate pursuit of poetry, with a very moderate genius, creates a perpetual state of illusion; and pursues gray-headed folly even to the verge of the grave.

Pope imagined that PRIOR was only fit to make verses, and less qualified for business than Addison himself. Had Prior lived to finish that history of his own times he was writing, we should have seen how far the opinion of Pope was right. Prior abandoned the Whigs, who had been his first patrons, for the Tories, who were now willing to adopt the political apostate. This versatility for place and pension rather shows that Prior was a little more "qualified for business than Addison."

Johnson tells us "Prior lived at a time when the rage of party detected all which was any man's interest to hide; and, as little ill is heard of Prior, it is certain that not much was known:" more, however, than Johnson supposes. This great man came to the pleasing task of his poetical biography totally unprepared, except with the maturity of his genius, as a profound observer of man, and an invincible dogmatist in taste. In the history of the times, Johnson is deficient, which has deprived us of that permanent instruction and delight his intellectual powers had poured around it. The character and the secret history of Prior are laid open in the "State Poems;"* a bitter Whiggish narrative, too particular to be entirely fictitious, while it throws a new light on Johnson's observation of Prior's "propensity to sordid converse, and

* Vol. ii. p. 355.

the low delights of mean company," which Johnson had imperfectly learned from some attendant on Prior.

"A vintner's boy, the wretch was first preferr'd
To wait at Vice's gates, and pimp for bread;
To hold the candle, and sometimes the door,
Let in the drunkard, and let out ——.
But, as to villains it has often chanc'd,
Was for his wit and wickedness advanced.
Let no man think his new behaviour strange,
No metamorphosis can nature change;
Effects are chain'd to causes; generally,
The rascal born will like a rascal die.
"His Prince's favours follow'd him in vain;
They chang'd the circumstance, but not the man.
While out of pocket, and his spirits low,
He'd beg, write panegyrics, cringe, and bow;
But when good pensions had his labours crown'd,
His panegyrics into satires turn'd;
O what assiduous pains does Prior take
To let great Dorset see he could mistake!
Dissembling nature false description gave,
Show'd him the poet, but conceal'd the knave."

To us the Poet Prior is better known than the placeman Prior; yet in his own day the reverse often occurred. Prior was a State Proteus; Sunderland, the most ambiguous of politicians, was the *Erle Robert* to whom he addressed his *Mice;* and Prior was now Secretary to the Embassy at Ryswick and Paris; independent even of the English ambassador—now a Lord of Trade, and, at length, a Minister Plenipotentiary to Louis XIV.

Our business is with his poetical feelings.

Prior declares he was chiefly "a poet by accident;" and hints, in collecting his works, that "some of them, as they came singly from the first impression, have lain long and quietly in Mr. Tonson's shop." When his party had their downfall, and he was confined two years in prison, he composed his "Alma" to while away prison hours; and when, at length, he obtained his freedom, he had nothing remaining but that fellowship which, in his exaltation, he had been censured for retaining, but which he then said he might have to live upon at last. Prior had great sagacity, and too right a

notion of human affairs in politics, to expect his party would last his time, or in poetry, that he could ever derive a revenue from rhymes!

I will now show that that rare personage, a sensible poet, in reviewing his life in that hour of solitude when no passion is retained but truth, while we are casting up the amount of our past days scrupulously to ourselves, felicitated himself that the natural bent of his mind, which inclined to poetry, had been checked, and not indulged, throughout his whole life. Prior congratulated himself that he had been only "a poet by accident," not by occupation.

In a manuscript by Prior, consisting of "An Essay on Learning," I find this curious and interesting passage entirely relating to the poet himself:

"I remember nothing farther in life than that I made verses; I chose Guy Earl of Warwick for my first hero, and killed Colborne the giant before I was big enough for Westminster School. But I had two accidents in youth which hindered me from being quite possessed with the Muse. I was bred in a college where prose was more in fashion than verse,—and, as soon as I had taken my first degree, I was sent the King's Secretary to the Hague; there I had enough to do in studying French and Dutch, and altering my Terentian and Virgilian style into that of Articles and Conventions; so that *poetry, which by the bent of my mind might have become the business of my life, was, by the happiness of my education, only the amusement of it;* and in this too having the prospect of some little fortune to be made, and friendships to be cultivated with the great men, I did not launch much into *Satire*, which, however agreeable for the present to the writers and encouragers of it, does in time do neither of them good: considering the uncertainty of fortune, and the various changes of Ministry, and that every man, as he resents, may punish in his turn of greatness and power."

Such is the wholesome counsel of the Solomon of Bards to an aspirant, who in his ardour for poetical honours, becomes careless of their consequences, if he can but possess them.

I have now to bring forward one of those unhappy men of rhyme, who, after many painful struggles, and a long querulous

life, have died amid the ravings of their immortality—one of those miserable bards of mediocrity, whom no beadle-critic could ever whip out of the poetical parish.

There is a case in Mr. Haslam's "Observations on Insanity," who assures us that the patient he describes was insane, which will appear strange to those who have watched more poets than lunatics!

"This patient, when admitted, was very noisy, and importunately talkative—reciting passages from the Greek and Roman poets, or talking of his own literary importance. He became so troublesome to the other madmen, who were sufficiently occupied with their own speculations, that they avoided and excluded him from the common room; so that he was at last reduced to the mortifying situation of being the sole auditor of his own compositions. He conceived himself very nearly related to Anacreon, and possessed of the peculiar vein of that poet."

Such is the very accurate case drawn up by a medical writer. I can conceive nothing in it to warrant the charge of insanity; Mr. Haslam, not being a poet, seems to have mistaken the common orgasm of poetry for insanity itself.

Of such poets, one was the late PERCIVAL STOCKDALE, who, with the most entertaining simplicity, has, in "The Memoirs of his Life and Writings," presented us with a full-length figure of this class of poets; those whom the perpetual pursuits of poetry, however indifferent, involve in a perpetual illusion; they are only discovered in their profound obscurity by the piteous cries they sometimes utter; they live on querulously, which is an evil for themselves, and to no purpose of life, which is an evil to others.

I remember in my youth, Percival Stockdale, as a condemned poet of the times; of whom the bookseller Flexney complained, that whenever this poet came to town, it cost him twenty pounds. Flexney had been the publisher of Churchill's works; and, never forgetting the time when he published "The Rosciad," which at first did not sell, and afterwards became the most popular poem, he was speculating all his life for another Churchill, and another quarto poem. Stockdale

usually brought him what he wanted—and Flexney found the workman, but never the work.

Many a year had passed in silence, and Stockdale could hardly be considered alive, when, to the amazement of some curious observers of our literature, a venerable man, about his eightieth year, a vivacious spectre, with a cheerful voice, seemed as if throwing aside his shroud in gaiety—to come to assure us of the immortality of one of the worst poets of the time.

To have taken this portrait from the life would have been difficult; but the artist has painted himself, and manufactured his own colours; else had our ordinary ones but faintly copied this Chinese grotesque picture—the glare and the glow must be borrowed from his own pallet.

Our self-biographer announces his "Life" with prospective rapture, at the moment he is turning a sad retrospect on his "Writings;" for this was the chequered countenance of his character, a smile while he was writing, a tear when he had published! "I know," he exclaims, "that this book will live and escape *the havoc that has been made of my literary fame.*" Again—"Before I die, *I think my literary fame may be fixed on an adamantine foundation.*" Our old acquaintance, Blas of Santillane, at setting out on his travels, conceived himself to be *la huitième merveille du monde;* but here is one, who, after the experience of a long life, is writing a large work to prove himself that very curious thing.

What were these mighty and unknown works? Stockdale confesses that all his verses have been received with negligence or contempt; yet their mediocrity, the absolute poverty of his genius, never once occurred to the poetical patriarch.

I have said that the frequent origin of bad poets is owing to bad critics; and it was the early friends of Stockdale, who, mistaking his animal spirits for genius, by directing them into the walks of poetry, bewildered him for ever. It was their hand that heedlessly fixed the bias in the rolling bowl of his restless mind.

He tells us that while yet a boy of twelve years old, one day talking with his father at Branxton, where the battle

of Flodden was fought, the old gentleman said to him with great emphasis—

"You may make that place remarkable for your birth, if you take care of yourself. My father's understanding was clear and strong, and he could penetrate human nature. He already saw that *I had natural advantages above those of common men.*"

But it seems that, at some earlier period even than his twelfth year, some good-natured Pythian had predicted that Stockdale would be "a poet." This ambiguous oracle was still listened to, after the lapse of more than half a century, and the decree is still repeated with fond credulity:—"Notwithstanding," he exclaims, "*all that is past*, O thou god of my mind! [meaning the aforesaid Pythian] I still hope that my future fame will decidedly *warrant the prediction!*"

Stockdale had, in truth, an excessive sensibility of temper, without any control over it—he had all the nervous contortions of the Sybil, without her inspiration; and shifting, in his many-shaped life, through all characters and all pursuits, "exalting the olive of Minerva with the grape of Bacchus," as he phrases it, he was a lover, a tutor, a recruiting officer, a reviewer, and, at length, a clergyman; but a poet eternally! His mind was so curved, that nothing could stand steadily upon it. The accidents of such a life he describes with such a face of rueful simplicity, and mixes up so much grave drollery and merry pathos with all he says or does, and his ubiquity is so wonderful, that he gives an idea of a character, of whose existence we had previously no conception, that of a Sentimental Harlequin.*

In the early part of his life, Stockdale undertook many poetical pilgrimages; he visited the house where Thomson was born; the coffee-room where Dryden presided among the

* My old favourite Cynic, with all his rough honesty and acúte discrimination, Anthony Wood, engraved a sketch of Stockdale when he etched with his aqua-fortis the personage of a brother:—"This Edward Waterhouse wrote a rhapsodical, indigested, whimsical work; and not in the least to be taken into the hand of any sober scholar, unless it be to make him laugh or wonder at the simplicity of some people. He was a cockbrained man, and afterwards took orders."

wits, &c. Recollecting the influence of these local associations, he breaks forth, "Neither the unrelenting coldness, nor the repeated insolence of mankind, can prevent me from thinking that *something like this enthusiastic devotion may hereafter be paid to* me."

Perhaps, till this appeared, it might not be suspected that any unlucky writer of verse could ever feel such a magical conviction of his poetical stability. Stockdale, to assist this pilgrimage to his various shrines, has particularized all the spots where his works were composed! Posterity has many shrines to visit, and will be glad to know (for perhaps it may excite a smile) that "The Philosopher, a poem, was written in Warwick Court, Holborn, in 1769,"—"The Life of Waller, in Round Court in the Strand."—And a good deal he wrote in "May's Buildings, St. Martin's Lane," &c. but

"In my lodgings at Portsmouth, in St. Mary's Street, I wrote my Elegy on the Death of a Lady's Linnet. It will not be uninteresting to sensibility, to thinking and elegant minds. It deeply interested me, and therefore produced not one of my weakest and worst written poems. It was directly opposite to a noted house, which was distinguished by the name of *the green rails;* where the riotous orgies of Naxos and Cythera contrasted with my quiet and purer occupations."

I would not, however, take his own estimate of his own poems; because, after praising them outrageously, he seems at times to doubt if they are as exquisite as he thinks them! He has composed no one, in which some poetical excellence does not appear—and yet in each nice decision he holds with difficulty the trepidations of the scales of criticism—for he tells us of "An Address to the Supreme Being," that "it is distinguished throughout with a natural and fervid piety; it is flowing and poetical; it is not without its pathos." And yet, notwithstanding all this condiment, the confection is evidently good for nothing; for he discovers that "this flowing, fervid, and poetical address" is "not animated with that vigour which gives dignity and impression to poetry." One feels for such unhappy and infected authors—they would think of themselves as they wish, at the moment that truth and experience

come in upon them, and rack them with the most painful feelings.

Stockdale once wrote a declamatory life of Waller.—When Johnson's appeared, though in his biography, says Stockdale, "he paid a large tribute to the abilities of Goldsmith and Hawkesworth, *yet he made no mention of my name.*" It is evident that Johnson, who knew him well, did not care to remember it. When Johnson was busied on the life of Pope, Stockdale wrote a pathetic letter to him, *earnestly imploring* "a generous tribute from his authority." Johnson was still obdurately silent; and Stockdale, who had received many acts of humane kindness from him, adds with fretful *naïveté*,

"In his sentiments towards me he was divided between a benevolence to my interests, and a *coldness to my fame.*"

Thus, in a moment, in the perverted heart of the scribbler, will ever be cancelled all human obligation for acts of benevolence, if we are *cold to his fame!*

And yet let us not too hastily condemn these unhappy men, even for the violation of the lesser moral feelings—it is often but a fatal effect from a melancholy cause; that hallucination of the intellect, in which, if their genius, as they call it, sometimes appears to sparkle like a painted bubble in the buoyancy of their vanity, they are also condemned to see it sinking in the dark horrors of a disappointed author, who has risked his life and his happiness on the miserable productions of his pen. The agonies of a disappointed author cannot, indeed, be contemplated without pain. If they can instruct, the following quotation will have its use.

Among the inumerable productions of Stockdale, was a History of Gibraltar; which might have been interesting, from his having resided there: in a moment of despair, like Medea, he immolated his unfortunate offspring.

"When I arrived at within a day's work of its conclusion, in consequence of some immediate and mortifying accidents, *my literary adversity*, and all my other misfortunes, took *fast hold of my mind; oppressed it extremely; and reduced it to a stage of the deepest dejection and despondency.* In this unhappy view of life, I made a sudden resolution—*never more to prosecute the profession of an author;* to retire altogether from the

world, and read only for consolation and amusement. *I committed to the flames my History of Gibraltar, and my translation of Marsollier's Life of Cardinal Ximenes;* for which the bookseller had refused to pay me the fifty guineas according to agreement."

This claims a tear! Never were the agonies of literary disappointment more pathetically told.

But as it is impossible to have known poor deluded Stockdale, and not to have laughed at him more than to have wept for him—so the catastrophe of this author's literary life is as finely in character as all the acts. That catastrophe, of course, is his last poem.

After many years his poetical demon having been chained from the world, suddenly broke forth on the reports of a French invasion. The narrative shall proceed in his own inimitable manner.

"My poetical spirit excited me to write my poem of 'The Invincible Island.' I never found myself in a happier disposition to compose, nor ever wrote with more pleasure. I presumed warmly to hope, that unless *inveterate prejudice and malice* were as invincible as our island itself, it would have *the diffusive circulation* which I earnestly desired.

"Flushed with this idea—borne impetuously along by *ambition and by hope, though they had often deluded me*, I set off in the mail-coach from Durham, for London, on the 9th of December, 1797, at midnight, and in a severe storm. On my arrival in town, my poem was advertised, printed, and published with great expedition. It was printed for Clarke in New Bond-street. For several days the sale was very promising; and my bookseller as well as myself entertained sanguine hopes; *but the demand for the poem relaxed gradually!* From this last of many literary misfortunes, I inferred that *prejudice* and *malignity*, in my fate as an *author*, seemed, indeed, to be invincible."

The catastrophe of the poet is much better told than anything in the poem, which had not merit enough to support that interest which the temporary subject had excited.

Let the fate of Stockdale instruct some, and he will not have written in vain the "Memoirs of his Life and Writings." I

have only turned the literary feature to our eye; it was combined with others, equally striking, from the same mould in which that was cast. Stockdale imagined he possessed an intuitive knowledge of human nature. He says, "everything that constituted my nature, my acquirements, my habits, and my fortune, conspired to let in upon me a complete knowledge of human nature." A most striking proof of this knowledge is his parallel, after the manner of Plutarch, between Charles XII. and Himself! He frankly confesses there were some points in which he and the Swedish monarch did not exactly resemble each other. He thinks, for instance, that the King of Sweden had a somewhat more fervid and original genius than himself, and was likewise a little more robust in his person—but, subjoins Stockdale,

"Of our reciprocal fortune, achievements and conduct, some parts will be to *his* advantage, and some to *mine*."

Yet in regard to *Fame*, the main object between him and Charles XII., Stockdale imagined that his own

"Will not probably take its fixed and immoveable station, and shine with its expanded and permanent splendour, till it consecrates his ashes, till it illumines his tomb!"

Pope hesitated at deciding on the durability of his poetry. Prior congratulates himself that he had not devoted all his days to rhymes. Stockdale imagines his fame to commence at the very point (the tomb) where genius trembles its own may nearly terminate!

To close this article, I could wish to regale the poetical Stockdales with a delectable morsel of fraternal biography; such would be the life and its memorable close of Elkanah Settle, who imagined himself to be a great poet, when he was placed on a level with Dryden by the town-wits, gentle spirits! to vex genius.

Settle's play of "The Empress of Morocco" was the very first "adorned with sculptures." However, in due time, the Whigs despising his rhymes, Settle tried his prose for the Tories; but he was a magician whose enchantments never charmed. He at length obtained the office of the city poet, when lord mayors were proud enough to have laureates in their annual pageants.

When Elkanah Settle published any *party-poem*, he sent copies round to the chiefs of the party, accompanied with addresses, to extort pecuniary presents. He had latterly one standard *Elegy* and *Epithalamium* printed off with blanks, which by the ingenious contrivance of filling up with the names of any considerable person, who died or was married, no one who was going out of life or entering it, *could pass scot-free* from the *tax levied by his hackneyed muse*. The following letter accompanied his presentation copy to the Duke of Somerset, on a poem, in Latin and English, on the Hanover succession, when Elkanah wrote for the Whigs, as he had for the Tories:—

"Sir,

"Nothing but the greatness of the subject could encourage my presumption in laying the enclosed Essay at your Grace's feet, being with all profound humility, your Grace's most dutiful servant, E. Settle."

In the latter part of his life Settle dropped still lower, and became the poet of a booth at Bartholomew-fair, and composed drolls, for which the rival of Dryden, it seems, had a genius!—but it was little respected—for two great personages, "Mrs. Mimms, and her daughter Mrs. Leigh," approving of their great Poet's happy invention in one of his own drolls, "St. George for England," of a green dragon, as large as life, insisted, as the tyrant of old did to the inventor of the brazen bull, that the first experiment should be made on the artist himself, and Settle was tried in his own dragon; he crept in with all his genius, and did "act the dragon, enclosed in a case of green leather of his own invention." The circumstance is recorded in the lively verse of Young, in his "Epistle to Pope concerning the authors of the age."

"Poor Elkanah, all other changes past,
For bread in Smithfield dragons hiss'd at last,
Spit streams of fire to make the butchers gape,
And found his manners suited to his shape;
Such is the fate of talents misapplied;
So lived your prototype, and so he died."

INDEX.

A.

	Page
AKENSIDE exhibited as a ludicrous personage by Smollet; his real character cast in the moulds of Antiquity *n*	227
Amhurst, a political author, his history	117
Arnall a great political scribe	117
Ascham, Roger, the founder of English Prose	126
Athenæ Britannicæ, one of the rarest works, account of	139
Athenæ Oxonienses, an apology for	205
Authors, Horace Walpole affects to despise them	150
——— their maladies	184
——— case of, stated	118
——— incompetent remuneration of	126
——— who wrote above the genius of their own age	197
——— ill reception from the public of their valuable works	197
——— who have sacrificed their fortunes to their studies	198
——— who commenced their literary life with ardour, and found their genius obstructed by numerous causes	198
——— who have never published their works	199
——— provincial, liable to bad passions	244
——— by profession, a phrase of modern origin	113
——————— original letter to a Minister from one	114
——————— Fielding's apology for them	119

B.

Baker, Rev. *Thomas*, his collection	204
Barnes, Joshua, wrote a poem to prove Solomon was the author of the Iliad, and why	208
——— his pathetic letter descriptive of his literary calamities	209
——— hints at the vast number of his unpublished works	210
Bayne, Alexander, died of intense application	183
Biographia Britannica in danger of being left unfinished	197
Booksellers in the reign of Elizabeth	126
——— why their interest is rarely combined with the advancement of literature *n*	198
——————— why they prefer the crude to the matured fruit	332

C.

Carey, Henry, author of several of our national poems, of the words and the air of "God save the King," and of Chrononhotonthologos, &c., his miserable end	213
———*Henry*, inventor of "Namby Pamby"	213
Carey's Wish, a patriotic song on the Freedom of Election, by the author of "God save the King" *n*	213
Carey's "Sally in our Alley" a popular ballad, its curious origin	213
Carte, Thomas, his valuable history,	222
——————— its fate from his indiscretion	225
Castell. Dr. ruined in health and fortune by the publication of his Polyglott *n*.	308
Chatterton, his balance-sheet on the Lord Mayor's death *n*.	132
Churchyards Thomas, an unhappy poet, describes his patrons	133
——————— his pathetic description of his wretched old age	135
Cole, Rev. *William*, his character	202
——————— his melancholy confession on his lengthened literary labours	203
——————— his misery how to dispose of his collections	204
Collins, the poet, quits the university suddenly with romantic hopes of becoming an author	297
——— publishes his "Odes" without success, and afterwards indignantly burns the edition	298
——— defended from some reproaches of irresolution, made by Johnson	299
——— anecdote of his life in the Metropolis	300
——— anecdotes of, when under the influence of a disordered intellect	301
——— his monument described	301

Page
Collins, two Sonnets descriptive of Collins 303
——— his poetical character defended 304
Contemporaries, how they seek to level genius 326
Colgrave, Randle, falls blind in the labour of his Dictionary . . 183
Cowel, incurs by his curious work "The Interpreter" the censure of the King and the Commons on opposite principles 314
Cowley, original letter from *n*. 144
——— his essays form a part of his confessions 145
——— describes his feelings at Court 145
——— his melancholy attributed to his Ode to Brutus, by which he incurred the disgrace of the Court 149
——— his remarkable lamentation for having written poetry . . 149
——— his Epitaph composed by himself 150
Critic, poetical, without any taste, how he contrived to criticise poems 255
Criticism, illiberal, some of its consequences stated 253

D.

Davies, Myles, a mendicant author, his life 139
Dedication, composed by a patron to himself *n* 137
Dedications, practised in an extraordinary way *n*. 137
De Lolme's work on the constitution could find no patronage, and the author's bitter complaints 320
——— relieved by the Literary fund *n*. 321
Dennis, John, distinguished as "The Critic" 161
——— his "Original Letters," and "Remarks on Prince Arthur," his best productions 161
——— anecdotes of his brutal vehemence 164
——— curious caricature of his personal manners 163
——— a specimen of his anti-poetical notions *n*. 165
——— his frenzy on the Italian Opera 167
——— acknowledges that he is considered as ill-natured, and complains of public neglect 167
——— more really the victim of his criticisms than the genius he insulted 168
Drake, Dr. *John*, a political writer, his miserable life 118
Drayton's national work, "The Polyolbion," ill received, and the author greatly dejected 330
——— angry preface addressed "To any that will read it" . . . 332
Dryden, in his old age, complains of dying of over-study . . . 325
——— his dramatic life a series of vexations and hostility . . . 325
——— regrets he was born among Englishmen 327
——— remarkable confession of the poet 327

E.

Exercise, to be substituted for medicine by literary men, and which is the best *n*. 185

F.

Farneworth's Translation of Machiavel 196

G.

Goldsmith's remonstrance on illiberal criticism from which the law gives no protection 256
Granger's complaint of not receiving half the pay of a scavenger . . 196
Grey, Dr. *Zachary*, the father of our commentators, ridiculed and abused 216
——— the probable origin of his new mode of illustrating Hudibras 216
Greene, Robert, a town wit, awful satirical address to *n*. . . . 232
Guthrie offers his services as a hackney writer to a minister . . 114

H.

Harvey, Gabriel, his character 232
——— his device against his antagonist *n*. 232
——— his portrait 233
——— severely satirized by Nash for his prolix periods—cannot be endured to be considered as the son of a rope-maker—his pretended

Page

sordid manners—his affectation of Italian fashions—his friends ridiculed—his pedantic taste for hexameter verses, &c. 235
——— his curious remonstrance with Nash . . . 238
——— his lamentations on invectives 242
——— his books, and Nash's, suppressed by order of the Archbishop of Canterbury, for their mutual virulence 233
Hawkesworth, Dr., letter on presenting his MS. of Cook's Voyages for examination, the publication of which overwhelmed his fortitude and intellect 318
Henley, Orator, this buffoon an indefatigable student, an elegant poet, and wit 168
——— his poem of "Esther, Queen of Persia," . . . 169
——— sudden change in his character 173
——— seems to have attempted to pull down the Church and the University 174
——— some idea of his lectures *n*. 174
——— his projects to supply a Universal School . . . 175
——— specimens of his buffoonery on solemn occasions 178
——— his "Defence of the Oratory" *n*. 176
——— once found his match in two disputants . . . 178
——— specimen of the diary of his "Oratory Transactions" 178
——— his character 180
Henry, Dr., the Historian the sale of his work, on which he had expended much of his fortune and his life, stopped, and himself ridiculed, by a conspiracy raised against him 249
——— caustic review of his history *n*. 250
Heron, Robert draws up the distresses of a man of letters living by literary industry in the confinement of a sponging-house, from his original letter 194
Herrick, Robert, petulant invective against Devonshire . . . 336
Howel, nearly lost his life by excessive study 184
Hume, his literary life how mortified with disappointments . . . 322
——— wished to change his name and his country . . . 322
——— his letter to Des Maiseaux requesting his opinion of his philosophy 323

I and J.

Icon Libellorum. See *Athenæ Britannicæ.*

K.

Kennet's, Bishop, Register and Chronicle 199
Kenrick, Dr., a caustic critic, treats our great authors with the most amusing arrogance 255
——— an epigram on himself, by himself *n*. 256

L.

Leland, the antiquary, an accomplished scholar 289
——— his "Strena," or New Year's Gift to Henry VIII., an account of his studies and his magnificent projects 289
——— doubts that his labours will reach posterity . . . 293
——— he values "the furniture" of his mind 293
——— his bust striking from its physiognomy 294
——— the ruins of his mind discovered in his library . . . 295
——— the inscription on his tomb probably had been composed by himself, before his insanity 296
Lightfoot, could not procure the printing of his work 311
Literary Property, difficulties to ascertain its nature . . . 126
——— history of 126
——— value of *n* 127
Lloyd's, Bishop, collections and their fate 204
Logan, the history of his literary disappointments; dies broken-hearted 190
——— his idea of a great author 191

M.

M'Donald or *Matthew Bramble*, his tragical reply to an inquiry after his tragedy 188
Macdiarmid, John, died of over-study and exhaustion . . . 185
Martin Mar-Prelate's libels issuing from a moveable press carried about the country 229
Melancholy persons, frequently the most delightful companions *n* . . 300
Mickle's pathetic address to his muse 328

Page

Mickle, his disappointments after the publication of the Lusiad induce him to wish to abandon his native country 329
Milton's works the favourite prey of booksellers 128
Mortimer, Thomas, his complaint in old age of the preference given to young adventurers 186

N.

Nash, Tom, the misery of his literary life 130
——— threatens his patrons 131
——— his character as a Lucianic satirist 232
——— silences Mar-Prelate with his own weapons 229
——— his "Have with you to Saffron Walden," a singular literary invective against Gabriel Harvey 231
Newton, of a fearful temper in criticism *n* 254

O.

Ockley, Simon, among the first of our authors who exhibited in the East a great nation in his "History of the Saracens" 305
——— his sufferings expressed in a remarkable preface dated from jail 305
——— dines with the Earl of Oxford, with an original letter of apology for his uncourtly behaviour 308
——— exults in prison for the leisure it affords for study *n* 311
——— neglected, but employed by ministers 311
Oldmixon asserts Lord Clarendon's History to have been interpolated, while himself falsifies Daniel's Chronicle *n* 116

P.

Pattison, a young poet, his despair in an address to Heaven, and a pathetic letter 210
Poets, mediocre Critics are the real origin of *mediocre* . . . 334
——— Nat. Lee describes their wonderful susceptibility of praise . 334
——— provincial, their situation at variance with their feelings . 335
Prior, curious character of, from a Whig satire 337
——— felicitated himself that his natural inclination for poetry had been checked 339
Proclamation issued by James I. against Cowel's book, "The Interpreter," a curious document in literary history 314
Prideaux' "Connexion of Old and New Testament" 195
Prince's "Worthies of Devon" 196
Prynne, a voluminous author without judgment, but the character of the man not so ridiculous as the author 262
——— his intrepid character 262
——— his curious argument against being debarred from pen and ink *n* 262
——— his interview with Laud in the Tower *n* 264
——— had a good deal of cunning in his character *n* . . . 265
——— grieved for the Revolution in which he himself had been so conspicuous a leader 265
——— his speeches as voluminous as his writings *n*. . . . 266
——— seldom dined *n*. 267
——— account of his famous "Histriomastix" 267
——— Milton admirably characterizes Prynne's absurd learning *n*. 267
——— how the "Histriomastix" was at once an elaborate work of many years, and yet a temporary satire—the secret history of the book being as extraordinary as the book itself 268

R.

Ridicule described; it creates a fictitious personage . . . 227
Ritson, Joseph, the late poetical antiquary, carried criticism to insanity 161
Ritson, Isaac, a young Scotch writer, perishes by attempting to exist by the efforts of his pen 186
——— his extemporary rhapsody descriptive of his melancholy fate 187
Rushworth dies of a broken heart, having neglected his own affairs for his "Historical Collections" 197
Rymer's distress in forming his "Historical Collections" . . . 197
Ryves, Eliza, her extraordinary literary exertions and melancholy end 222

Page

S.

Sale, the learned, often wanted a meal while translating the Koran, *n* 308
Scot, Reginald, persecuted for his work against Witchcraft . . 317
Scott of Amwell, the Quaker and poet, offended at being compared to Capt. Macheath by the affected witticism of a Reviewer . . 257
——— his extraordinary "Letter to the Critical Reviewers," in which he enumerates his own poetical beauties . . . 257
Selden compelled to recant his opinions, and not suffered to reply to his calumniators 318
——— refuses James I. to publish his defence of the Sovereignty of the Seas, till Grotius provoked his reply 318
Settle, Elkanah, the ludicrous close of a scribbler's life . . . 347
Shuckford, "Sacred and Profane History connected" . . . 196
Smollett confesses the incredible labour and chagrin he endured as an author 121
Steele, his paradoxical character 284
——— why he wrote a laughable comedy after his "Christian Hero" 286
——— his ill choice in a wife of an uncongenial character . 286
——— specimens of his "Love despatches" *n* 287
——— finely contrasts his own character with that of Addison's *n* . 288
Stillingfleet, Bishop, his end supposed to have been hastened by Locke's confutation of his metaphysical notions *n* 254
Stockdale, Percival, his character; an extraordinary instance of the illusions of writers in verse 345
——— draws a parallel between Charles XII. and himself 346
Stowe, the Chronicler, petitions to be a licensed beggar . . 136
——— ridiculed and persecuted 136
Strutt, the late antiquary, a man of genius and imagination . . 197
——— his spirited letters on commencing his career of authorship . 201
Stuart, Dr. *Gilbert*, his envious character; desirous of destroying the literary works of his countrymen 244
——— projects the Edinburgh Magazine and Review, its design 245
——— his horrid feelings excited by his disappointments 248
——— raises a literary conspiracy against Dr. Henry . 249
——— dies miserably 253
Subscriptions once inundated our literature with worthless works . 137

T.

Toland, a lover of study 271
——— defends himself from the aspersion of atheism or deism . 273
——— accused of an intention to found a sect . . . 274
——— had the art of explaining away his own words . . 275
——— a great artificer of title-pages 276
——— his "Pantheisticon" 278
——— projects a new office of a private monitor to the minister . 280
——— of the books he read and his MSS. *n* 282
——— his panegyrical epitaph composed by himself . . 283
——— Locke's admirable foresight of his character . . . 284
Tonson's bickerings with Dryden *n* 124

W.

Walpole, Horace, his literary character 151
——— instances of his pointed vivacity against authors *n*. 151
——— why he attacked the fame of Sydney, and defended Richard III. 154
——— his literary mortifications acknowledged by himself from his original letters 155
——— how Gray treated him when invited to Strawberry-hill *n* 155
——— extraordinary letter of, expressing his contempt of his most celebrated contemporaries 158
Wharton, Henry, sunk under his historical studies . . 184
Wood, Anthony, his character 205
——— an apology for the "Athenæ Oxonienses" . . . 205
——— the writers of a party whom he abhorred frequently refer to him in their own favour 206
Works, valuable, not completed from deficient encouragement . 199

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